





OTTERBOURNE;

A STORY OF THE ENGLISH MARCHES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DERWENTWATER."

The Englyshmenne and the Skottes are good men of warre, for when they mete there is a hard fyght without sparynge.

LORD BERNER'S FROISSART.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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OTTERBOURNE.

CHAPTER I.

A young squier,
A lover and a lusty bachelor.

* * *

Curteis he was, lowly and servisable.

A Frere,
A Limitour, a full solempne man.

CHAUCER.

Gen. h. b. 1. fol. 10 v.

UPON the summit of one of those wild hungry steeps, half heath, half peeping rock, which abound upon the northern extremity of what have been called the English Appennines, an armed horseman took a solitary but apparently not motiveless station. It was in that season of the year when, using the words of a contemporary legend, "husbandes winne their haye;" though, in honest sooth, no signs of any such

genial harvesting softened the rugged scene exposed to his view. The gray mists of morning had just cleared away, and left the elevated outline of the mountain *fells* that here stretch between the two Britains (not then so designated, and still less so united) disclosed in dreary but distinct relief.

The frontier being, at this time, by no means defined as at present, it will be enough to say, that over the tract of territory which lay hence towards the Scottish side, the above individual threw searching glances of prolonged examination. The district known as the forest of Jed, or Jedworth, terminated his forward prospect, and upon that termination it was, that his regards most specially centered.

Across a lower and more accessible part of the hill, which he had evidently topped only for the purpose of outlook, ran a line of road, or rather, some marks of a passable route. The eye following this, might trace it to a ford in a brawling rill about a mile distant, and again

rising, to creep on until lost amidst some fern clad inequalities. Further in that direction, something like the smoke of habitation arose from behind a swelling mound, and furnished almost the only token of human existence discernible. After completing, what in our days would be termed his *reconnaissance*, the cavalier descended to the track in question, and pursued it, as if bent on penetrating into the opposite kingdom. As the reader must bear him company, it is proper that he should have some notion of the sort of person to whom he is introduced.

His equipment at once proclaimed him a man at arms of the period (1388), and his individual qualities promised him no ordinary one. He was a youth of goodly mien and fair proportions. A choice sample of active manhood, though not remarkable for “the thewes, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance” of it. He was, to use homely descriptives, clean limbed

and lithe of action ; fair-faced, moreover, and carrying a lightsome intelligent eye. His air possessed in an eminent degree the character which we associate with birth and station, yet his equipment did not announce him to be of such. The shield, slung to his neck, bore no emblazonry, and his open bacinet and pennonless lance argued him neither to have undergone the *colaphum*, or knightly box on the ear(!); nor the *osculum pacis*, which more gently signified the chivalric brotherhood. He was, however, well mounted and perfectly armed. Judging from his simple habergeon, and a silver crescent which he bore, more in the way of cognizance than as his own device, he might be pronounced a superior retainer in the service of some great feudatory. Perhaps one of those equivocally ranking household knights often entertained by the powerful baronage of that day.

Whosoever he might be, and whatsoever his

object, he regained the path he had lately quitted, and progressed cautiously and leisurely towards the ford just mentioned.

As he neared thereto, a second person, on foot, and of very different exterior, appeared, gradually approaching the same from the reverse quarter. The sight occasioned a moment's hesitation; but no more. A short scrutiny seemed to satisfy him that the way-farer was of a class not to give him any concern; he pushed on, and had passed the brook ere the other came up to it. They met, and a civil salutation was exchanged. People cannot cross and part with the vacant indifference of walkers in the Strand, when they encounter thus in a silent and desolate region.

The pedestrian was a man of middle age, attired in the gray gown and hood of a mendicant friar; both much the worse for wear. The latter primitive envelope surrounded a sharp featured shallow physiognomy, deeply channelled with lines of care and discontent, but indicative

of keenness and thought. Above this, and tending to confuse the idea of his calling otherwise suggested, was placed a slouching cap of felt, used as an additional protection against the weather. A scrip was appended to his shoulder, and in his hand he grasped a stout travelling staff. Altogether, the free roll of his eye, and a certain swing in gait, belonged rather to some itinerant tregatour, or jogeler, than to a devout contemner of worldly possessions.

The cavalier, reining up his steed in front of the other, prepared to accost him ; hesitating, however, for an instant, as puzzled on the style of address rightly becoming.

“Morrow to thee, holy father,” he cried at length, “if, indeed, such thou art ; and, if not, thou mayest not think I hail thee with an ill name. Thou art betimes afoot : how far hast journeyed this morn ?”

“Take thy morrow back, in good part, *Sir Knight*,” returned the gray gown, carelessly, and speaking as though he meant to retort

upon the last speaker his implied dubiety ; “ but as to thy concluding query, my response shall await our better acquaintance.”

“ Nay, faith ! thy bounty overswells my style,” said the cavalier, laughing, though at the same time a slight shade darkened his visage,—“ I boast not that degree.”

“ But hast thy *own* good will to it, I dare avouch,” said the gownsman, drily.

“ Peradventure. But to my behest, Sir Traveller, I have matter for my asking.”

“ And I, Sir Stranger, may have mine for being silent.”

“ Nathelss, thou shalt answer my question, and, mayhap, one or two more, before we separate.”

“ I bear a stout crab with me, friend,” said the other, exhibiting his staff—not, by the way, as if inclined really to “ shew fight,”—but in pertinacious argument. “ Thy steed will not avail thee much among these mosses.”

“ Come, gossip, be compliant,” rejoined the

man of arms, treating the demonstration with natural contempt; “I would not willingly be rough with thee.”

“My son,” said the now-avowed friar, assuming a severe air, “though I am but a poor brother of St. Francis, it is not meet that a layman should offer such irreverent language to mine ears. ’Tis pity one so young, and fair seeming, too, should have been mistaught his duties.”

“Essoin me, holy father,” replied the youth, altering his manner, “I was unassured of your clerkship; and, besides, am on a charge that permits no sacrifice to courtesy. Will it, then, please thee, in all amity, to resolve me a few points of information after thy best power? Thou shalt have grace, and guerdon, too, if it beseem thee to accept the latter.”

“Well—speak thy wishes.”

“I would know through what country thou hast lately passed; and if thou hast seen ought of warlike company in thy course? In short,

father,—you look like a shrewd observer, one that can scent a cause and catch a meaning—tell me, are there hostile stirrings in the forest yonder. Thence thou hast behoved to come.”

“ I understand—what then? Perchance, you present a dish I may not dip my finger in. I am from Scotland, as thou see’st.”

“ But, *certes!*—an Englishman?”

“ Of a truth, I am,” replied the Franciscan; an indefinable smile crossing a countenance in which the disposition to bitterness was strongly imprinted. “ I have had more reason to remember, than to boast of it.”

“ At any rate you are bound to circumvent the enemies of your countrymen.”

“ I had rather you had said, of my country. England, herself, I never can forget—but the distinction is not for you. Prithee, in whose service dost thou ride?”

“ Sir Friar, this is trifling. Thy pardon, if occasion makes me abrupt. ’Tis *I*, who seek of thee.”

" Yet inform, good youth. I ask not idly."

" Content thee, then ; I follow the banner of the Lord Warden."

" And he is ——"

" Sir Henry Percy."

" Um !" ejaculated the friar, apparently not dissatisfied with the intelligence. " Fame has tongued his deeds full loudly."

" Aye, and full justly. He is a warrior !"

" His *sire* is a tried one—though that is nought." The friar spoke, as if inwardly reflecting.

" How, father ?—nought to take the lead, wherein to dog at heel even, is laudatory !"

" Frown none, boy. Thy brow will not be always smooth ; therefore, spare it premature furrows. 'Twas the pernicious pride of arms I slighted, not the great earl. Him, I respect, on other grounds, somewhat beyond his peers."

" Thou art strange in speech, father !"

" I speak as a Christian man, Sir Cavalier, and will ever do't freely. But, come !—do me

an easy good turn, and I will fillip thine ear with something to thy purpose. You talked of guerdon—'tis the only one I will demand."

" Name it, then—name that same turn."

" Why, simply this: mount me on thy crupper, and carry me o'er yon runlet. I could wade it at a pinch, but a souzed gown and soaked startopes are not well to walk in. Hey! you'll do't, my son ?"

" Right willingly, father; and waste no time o'er't. Here, plant one foot on mine:—now, your hand—there, cleverly seated."

Thus disposed *en croupe*, the friar grappled the man at arms round the body, and that good-natured personage caused his horse a second time to plunge through the waters, landing his new acquaintance dry upon the southern bank.

" A benison on thee, my son!" said the Franciscan, after descending to parent earth. " Thou art a proper youth and a kindly. I marvel to find one such pricking under a puissant baron's cognizance."

“ Why that, father ? Where can the devoir of courtesy be learnt, if not in castle hall ? ”

“ Those who learn it there, learn also to confine it to such as sit and lord it there : supple to the greater, sullen to the less. Cockered into a consequence, they know not to be their own, your fellows deem civility to russet jerkins an imperilling of the loan. To such, they dole out fair speech as tho’ they feared being beggared by its too free use. Out on the swaggerers ! The curse of pauperhood light on ‘em all ! ”

“ Hold, there ! for thine own holy saints’ sake ! ”* exclaimed the man at arms, laughing. “ Methought, he taught ye poverty was a blessing. I fear me, father, thou hast met but scurvy treatment in the land of thy late sojourning, makes thee thus ireful. Aye, aye ! Hab has as few good words as pence, for any but a clansman. Chafe not at it, father, he that

* St. Francis enjoined those of his order to eschew worldly goods and live on alms alone.

makes his bed on an ice heap must'nt complain o' the cold. Yet, while I babble, time is wear-ing. Haste, reverend Sir, impart to me thy promised caution. If it colour after my sus-picions, there's much to be done to-day. Thank heaven, the summer's height makes a long one!"

The request now found a candid inclination in the hearer. That party entered immediately on certain details, the fruit of his itinerant ob-servation ; but preparatory to extending the same information to the reader, it will be expedient to take a short review of the relations of the times.

CHAPTER II.

Our father's met in battle, because they loved the strife of the spears.

OSS. FINGAL.

AT no period of our varied annals, did those devastating inroads, which at once marked the ferocity of the age, and the reciprocated animosity of the two island nations, occur more frequently and fearfully than in the reign of the unfortunate and imbecile Richard II. At this era, which is that of the following legend, war was alike the business and the pleasure of all whom Fortune had not allotted to toil. The spirit—mania, shall we call it?—of chivalry, was then, spite of some dawning of letters and civilization, still at its height. In England, the eldern nobles strongly partook the character of

the romantically valiant school in which they had been bred. They vividly remembered the feats performed in the train of the conquering Edward, and fired their ardent sons with the grateful repetition. Of France, again and again laid prostrate by their arms, the tale was often told, and greedily devoured. It is not, therefore, to be wondered, that the English youth shared profusely in that thirst after renown in field, which, more or less, prevailed over the whole of Europe, and which seemed, to its devotees, the chief end of existence. Neither is it surprising, that the great continental theatre of battle being at this juncture temporarily closed, the home frontier should become the arena of diverted contention.

The borders of either country were, as is well known, inhabited by a sturdy ungovernable race, well suited to the state of turmoil and insecurity in which they lived. The savage district wherever they were accustomed to roam, tended no less to assimilate to itself their mental impres-

sions, than to indurate their frame of body. In the religious practise of—

“ The good old rule, the simple plan,
That those should take, who have the power,
And those should keep who can,”

they were abundantly exercised. The habits engendered by such a course of life need not be formally premised.

The powerful houses that furnished hereditary chieftains, to control, or rather direct, these perennial warriors, had recently put forth some of their most distinguished scions. The Percies and the Nevilles on the one side, the Douglasses and Dunbars on the other ; besides many more of minor note. These, adding the combustibles of personal rivalry and pride of prowess to the lively flame of patriotism, kept up a continual exchange of visits, very different in character from such as probably pass between their living descendants. Residing in a state of constant watchfulness within their domestic fortresses,

they reposed in an attitude convenient alike to project or repel mischief. National truces were little regarded. Even in the midst of many such, deeds, wild as the hilly region which mostly witnessed them, were unrelentingly perpetrated.

About the eleventh year after Richard's accession, the borders enjoyed a transient but suspicious quiet. A brief season before, the young king in person, at the head of a large army, had invaded Scotland ; and, not meeting any opposition, had ravaged all the country south of the Forth frith ; burning Edinburgh and sacking the great abbey of Melrose. For this infliction, no attempt at co-extensive retaliation had hitherto been essayed ; but no one doubted that a fitting moment would be seized by a people usually so vindictive. Whispers and rumours had indeed actually traversed southward, concerning a congress of Scottish barons at Aberdeen ; held, it was said, to plan some measure of active hostility. However this might be,

it was generally believed, upon the English marches, that mischief hung somewhere in the wind. Fortunately, they were then under the protection of a Conservator, well able to confront the threatened visitation. This was Sir Henry Percy, already redoubted under his well-known *soubriquet*, who, though young, and in some degree guided by the experienced Earl, his father, was personally entrusted with the king's commission to that effect.

Moved by advices more definite, than influenced the popular opinion, Sir Henry had thought it prudent to dispatch several emissaries to probe, as it were, the enemies' frontier, and bring intelligence of appearances. To the most dangerous quarter he had sent an adventurous follower, on whom he had special reliance; one of his body esquires—by name, Raimond Farnley. He, it was, who encountered the friar, as recounted, and to him will events lead us now to return.

“And so you say, father, the Dales are posi-

tively up?" he demanded, pursuing a train of queries previously commenced.

"Aye, and spears from a farther gathering, or else they muster more men than I wot they could," replied the Franciscan. "Hay will be scarce in Jedworth, I can tell thee."

"Assembling so near, too?"

"So near, that, but for yon rising mounds, you might have ocular proof of their vicinity."

"Strange, then, we have not ere this been burst on! Marchmen are not wont to sleep upon a raid. Know you who leads the host?"

"That do I not, my son," returned the friar; who, it may be here noticed, used that paternal term, as the mode of address conventional to his order, but without much sanctity of manner; aught of that, indeed, he appeared to have cast aside, as unmeet for the occasion. Nor did it seem as if, at any time, he was greatly encumbered with it. He continued:—"I am little used to note the prancings and progressings of those perked up pests, that lord it o'er

the common soil ; neither have I bestowed my time to study the tinsel toys and painted symbols by which they are wont to proclaim their lineage and degree. I know not, therefore, whose name predominates in yonder gathering ; but enough I saw to be assured, that not one but many men of sway, are there concentering."

" Ha ! this waxes truly serious !" exclaimed the esquire. " For something like, I was prepared ; but not for such passing pregnant tidings. No ordinary foray can be meant," he pursued, soliloquizing aloud ; " the tale must be born to Alnwick, quickly—and yet, I would fain have my news more definite. At any rate, I should assure myself : hearsay is but hearsay."

" You doubt me. Thou didst not, e'en now, shew spice of that dubiety in permitting an unknown to mount behind, and hold thee at advantage. You trusted me in deed—you also may in word."

"Tush! Sir Friar, I suspect *thee* not," said the youth, carelessly; "but I would not hie home with a cock-bull story. My errand is to see, and eyes must be informants. Have you an English heart?—but God's faith, you are so cold and bloodless, I query if thou hast a heart at all!"

"Thou wouldest not, hadst thou known me in earlier days," said the friar, with a spark of feeling. "As it is, I may prove some remains; and the more readily, for the good will I bear your generous earl. What more have you to ask?"

"Why, this:—that thou wilt stay here and watch my horse and arms, whilst I venture into the village there, after my bounden quest."

"David alone, amongst the Philistines!" muttered the Franciscan. "Good youth, thou art forgone in mind. Said I not it was already beset by foemen?"

"You did—you did," returned the esquire. "Albeit, I will meet the risk. Believe me to

know what I would about, and say at once, if you will take the charge.”

“The Arabs of the east have a proverb which gives seven ways to judge a fool: by two of them thou art condemned.”

“Aye! which are they?”

“Incurring danger without profit, and putting trust in a stranger. Natheless, if thou art resolved, I’ll do thy bidding.”

“Enough, then, and hang the proverb!” said the esquire, immediately dismounting. “Here is my bridle; and now for the rest.”

He forthwith proceeded to disencumber himself of his shield and bacinet which he affixed to his saddle bow; also taking off his brassarts and greaves (armour for the arms and legs): then drawing from a valise a coarse supertunic and hood, such as commonly worn, he equipped himself therein.

“Thou see’st father,” said he, after he had completed his transfiguration, “that I have not committed a third point of folly in coming

abroad without a thought towards what might be needful. A good scout wants more outsides than one. What look I like now?"

"Nay, e'en like a very ordinary varlet, as I will be sworn thou art soothly not," said the Franciscan, surveying him with a somewhat kindly look.

"Good! it will do, then. Await me, father, behind this clump of gorse; but if I return not in such reasonable time as thou hast wit to guess, or if molestation threaten, mount my steed and spare him not. Direct your course to Alnwick Castle, and there report the advices you possess. Ne'er turn aside; but, saving that, do thy best to raise up the country as you ride.—Your promise?"

"By St. Francis. Yet I cannot choose but think thee a silly boy to rely on my performance."

"Mayhap, I am," returned the youth, seeking an eligible place whereat to spring across the streamlet, which, though rather deep than

broad, seemed to mock such an idea. “ Mayhap, I am, Sir Friar ; and to speak frankly, thy portaunce is none of the most inspiring. But cravers may not be choosers ; and, methinks, spite thy crabbed bearing, thou art no hilding fi’penny knave that will play me foul for sake of horse and harness. For what else, I trust to thy English blood.”

“ Thou shalt not repent the judgment. *Benedicte*, my son ! Go, and be fortunate ; since go thou wilt.”

The young esquire, taking a leap that would have credited an Ireland, cleared the watery obstacle, and strode vigorously forward on his intent.

Apparently precipitate, and certainly perilous as was the step thus undertaken, it was not entirely unconsidered. Raimond Farneley was not quite the rash harebrain he may have just seemed. He served under a leader, who he well knew would hold half information at little price, if he thought better might have been obtained

by greater daring. And as the opinion of others often goads us harder than our own, so was the esquire urged to sustain his place in the estimation of his master, and to attempt more than he might otherwise have confessed wise. He had, moreover, laid down in his own mind, a plan, plausible enough, by which he flattered himself he could attain his purpose, without absolutely thrusting his head into the lion's jaws. From many incursions over the border, he was sufficiently acquainted with the country around, to comprehend its facilities of surface; in all cases, a favouring incidence. Furthermore, in the hamlet of Bleaklaw, to which he was approaching, he recollects the cot of an obscure individual who owed him some return for a chance benefaction, and upon whom he thought he might calculate, for cover and counsel. Situated equivocally upon the common confine of the nations, the few inhabitants of that place were a mongrel breed, indifferent to the interests of either: from them he consequently anticipated no obstruc-

tion; but the rather countenance, if duly bought. The great object was to shun contact with the armed bodies, which he had been apprized of being a-foot. Once fairly within the precincts of Bleaklaw, his assumed garb might be a sufficient protection; but that chance would be much diminished, if not entirely destroyed, were he seen previously approaching from the true quarter. Interrogatories and suspicions, then, would pursue him; and, to be suspected, was to suffer failure.

Fully cognizant of these circumstances, our esquire's design was to make a circuit under shelter of the hill, or law (which gave name to the place, and at present shut him from view of it), and so enter in a direction opposite and unexposed. The plan was the more feasible, in that the cabin of his pre-supposed ally lay, as the Irish say, "convenient," at that extremity of the straggling hamlet.

Adopting the line of action above sketched out, the adventurer pushed forward in the rapid

springing sort of walk, usually denominated by persons who favour the plain vernacular—a dog-trot: from which he never relaxed until he was able to quit the regular track, and make a shield of the friendly eminence. Lucky it proved that he did use such celerity; for barely had he thus fenced himself, when he heard portentous sounds of movement along the said pathway.

Circling the hill, he kept his way, difficultly enough, until he conceived the village to be somewhere abreast; then climbing the ascent he determined to take a preparatory peep at the face of things beyond. To do this with due safety, when he came near the summit he crouched down, creeping close along the ground, until it became possible to overlook the top-ridge, without risking his person in dangerous relief against the sky; a consequence, which it need hardly be remarked, always accompanies an elevated stand. Having reached the desired

point, he laid upon the turf, and commenced his observations.

These were, indeed, of a nature to repay his labour. Excitement crowded on excitement, and for a moment the apprehensions of the emissary and the liegeman, yielded to the tumultuous emotions of the habitual votary of arms.

The scope of gaze was extensive, and most alarmingly filled. The whole of the country towards Jedworth being alive with warlike companies, converging upon Bleaklaw, and by some that place was already occupied. Arms and armour every way glistened in the sun, and the hum of bustle and vociferation swelled palpably to the ear. Leaders galloped to and fro; and all else that is concomitant to the mar shalling of an army, lent soul-stirring influence to the sight.

Tiviot, Liddel and Ettrick, nay, Esk and Annan beside, appeared to have furnished forth

their whole force of ruthless prickers ; ever ready at such call. These, bestriding their hardy hobbies, traversed the nearer levels in irregular troops, swinging and twirling their long lances in boisterous and impatient sport. Many of them had passed the village, and were advancing upon the southward road, in a manner that crushed Farneley's hopes of immediate retreat. But what looked most serious and gave—if it may be said—dignity to alarm, was the presence of large masses of halberdiers and pole-axe men ; as yet, chiefly in the distance. Strings of sumpter cattle could also be distinguished ; giving indication of a purpose beyond the ordinary duration of a foray.

After the astounded esquire had collected the recited details by a comprehensive glance, he found, beneath his immediate ken, what specially engaged attention. This was the commotion in Bleaklaw itself. In particular, he noticed, that around a small chapel or detached monastic cell, seated conspicuously on the verge

of the hamlet, groups of men at arms loitered about, and esquires tended the barbed steeds of imperious owners, obviously, as it seemed, engaged in conference within the little building, erected for other and holier objects. The numerous banners that floated above the heads of those who waited without, proclaimed the class and importance of the unwonted congregation. To Farneley, indeed, who was familiar with the arms and devices of all the northern chivalry, they spoke a full communication. He recognized at once the insignia of the Douglas, the Dunbars, the Lindesey, and the Graeme, amongst those of other powerful chiefs; and what gave him peculiar concern, he perceived the royal standard of Scotland. From the last, he was left to infer that a prince held rule over the armament.

The silent and solitary region in which the young esquire had been moving, just before this impressive spectacle broke upon him, naturally heightened its effect. For a time, reflection was

paralyzed in sensation; but it gradually returned, in all the vivid shapes which could occur to an acute, revolving mind. Of that order was Farneley's, and, moreover, imaginative. He gazed, and acknowledged impressions unfelt by sober men of facts.

No prophetic prelude is required to announce that a thunder-cloud pended, about to burst over the English march; and still less did the unseen observer need a boding admonition.

Intelligibly informed as he now stood, his wish would have been to effect a hasty retrograde, without prying into the village itself, as had been his original intention, but that no longer seemed practicable. Hence, he, almost perforce, adhered to that part of his project. Readily conceiving that the gathering was destined for other ends than to remain idle and stationary, he believed it the safest step left to take. Concealed in the hovel of his poor acquaintance, he thought he might lurk secure until the coast became sufficiently clear to allow

of his crossing the intervening country to Alnwick.

If aught had been wanting to confirm this resolve, he presently found it. For, taking a backward view, he casually descried the non-descript gownsman, whom he left in trust, mounted on his horse and scampering at utmost speed up the distant counter rise. He could not be mistaken, for the loose gray frock of the worthy puffed and streamed conspicuously in the wind. To bestow a hearty ban upon the faithless flier, was his first impulse; his second, to pray wings to his flight. When it is added, that he likewise discovered some of the advanced spears giving signs of a disposition to pursue, his quick change of sentiment lacks no explanation.

Farneley did not, it must be confessed, fail to anathematize (as men ever do when unsuccessful) the rashness which had created his awkward predicament: but after having taken the customary self-vengeance in muttered

“ dolts !” and “ fools !” he set himself to further action. He well knew the inutility of pondering for hours upon movements which must finally be the work of minutes.

The great world of humanity seems to be divided into two classes of individuals; those framed for doing, those endowed for thinking. Yet, like soul and body, they are indispensable to each other. Counsel must direct energy, and energy await counsel, but the qualities are seldom united. Where they *are* so powerfully, the certain product is a man successfully eminent. People noted for profundity of thought and acuteness of deduction, are generally averse to exertion, and little gifted with what are termed popular qualities. They probably like passing well, to “look on the great Babel,” though not “to feel the crowd.” Philosophers, who have taught wisdom to mankind, have often been found incapable of facing difficulties which a hundred blockheads would overcome without

even being aware of their existence. Nor is the cause an enigma ; the nervous irritability assignable to highly-exercised minds, affords an ample apology, as well as a solution. What really is, however, matter for speculation, is whether this diversity of attributes be not a charitable ordination in favour of the brainless. Arguing on the received opinion, that Providence impartially equalizes our shares of good and evil, may it not be assumed that a strong spirit is given to balance the insignificance of a weak intellect, and delicate fibres associated to clog the predominance of a powerful. To glance at the general principle ;—how frequently do we find genius stifled by poverty, and wealth wasted on imbecility ; ugliness, aided by address, and beauty insipid, because inane. The soul of Cæsar in the body of a pigmy, and the proportions of a Hercules enshrining only the brutal ignorance of Caliban ! But why have we troubled thee, reader, with the above disquisition,

which thou mayest find savouring of truism? Why, simply—because we intended to record the Esquire Farneley, an exception to the law inferred, as capable in head no less than vigorous of hand.

CHAPTER III.

Did I not charge you to keep your doors shut, Isbel ? and
you let them be open to all comers.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

THE inhabitants of Bleaklaw were, for the most part, half savage boors ; and the remainder, vagrant settlers. Amongst the latter order was Leonard Tyzack, a fabricator of leathern jerkins for the bipeds, and saddlery for the quadrupeds, in his scanty neighbourhood. To the hovel of that humble artizan, with the location of which he chanced to be familiar, Farneley directed his way ; not, however, by the most obvious passage, but re-descending the hill and continuing his circumbendibus.

Here might much paper and patience be devoted to an elaborate, but useless description,

of the favouring swells and fern clumps which shadowed the esquire's windings until he reached a narrow ravine that ran close along the back of the hamlet. It is omitted only from a conviction that no accumulation of words could convey a true picture to the mind's eye. Such pen and ink sketches are often tried, but generally prove mere mystifications. By the way, it would not be an unamusing experiment, to task different draughtsmen to pencil out each a landscape from any one of these delineations—verbal (and verbose), and then contrast diversities.

Driving through the rank grass and tangle that encumbered the friendly rift just alluded to, he at length found himself divided from Tyzack's cabin only by a wretched herb garden, extending from its rear towards his position. Into this he hastily forced a way, and approached the miserable postern. The latch he raised, and was about to push open the door, when he found it suddenly thrust against him, and a bolt shot. Almost at the same instant a

shrill voice was heard, shrieking to some other person, that an “unhanged reiver had gotten into the kale garth.”

A pause ensued ; during which, Farneley perceived more than one pair of eyes viewing him through the apertures of a rude lattice—and not without some misgiving. At last, a swart face, overhung by a pendant thatch of black hair, both loaded with the unctuous dew of a sultry day’s toil, was poked into sight.

“Ewhow!” ejaculated the head, in tones of mingled anger and apprehension, “Wha ha’ we here? Wist ye to be amang the southron cottars already, that ye make high road through quiet folks’ kale and pot-yerbs? Let me warn ye, chield, I ha’ well-wishers wi’ the lords o’er bye, that ’ill no see me harried without right or reason.” The speaker it must be stated, used an exaggerated Scottish accent, evidently affected ; but neither in that, nor in his natural one, is it desirable to imitate him.

It was clear that Tyzack imagined his visitor

to be some licentious follower of the assembling army, and spoke accordingly. Farneley withdrew his hood, and undeceived him.

“Linny,” said he, addressing him by the familiar contraction to which he was exclusively accustomed, “open your eyes—know a friend.”

“What!—the Squire Raim—?”

“Who saved thy bones at Caplestone edge. If thou art satisfied, admit me straight, and do not bandy names.”

“Why, Sir Squire, know ye the peril?” queried Tyzack, in dubitative mood.

“Aye, man, and *thee*, too. Thou shalt have guerdon worth a double risk; so open—quick.”

“Nay, I’ll serve a *friend*, were’t only for the novelty o’ meeting one I could call by the name, and not know I lied.”

“But, now I recollect, Linny, you have some one with you?”

“Only my wife,” said the other, opening the

door. “Please to come in—I wish I could say, take your ease as well.”

Farneley incontinently stepped into the single smoky apartment of which the whole dwelling consisted; and, in due time, was seated by the hearth on a stool raked out of a corner and dusted for his use. Tyzack, himself, resumed certain operations of his craft, which he was employing for the benefit of a dilapidated gambeson, the tough vest worn under armour to obviate its painful pressure. He was a broad shouldered bony fellow, who might have cleared his passage creditably through a *melée*; but that he laboured under a physical infirmity. An accident at birth had crippled one of his lower limbs—or rather had stunted its growth—for there was no excessive deformity; insomuch, that, though of average stature when elevated on his healthy supporter, he sunk at the next remove to dwarfish dimensions. His visage was long and square; and, together with

a vinegar expression, had much of that peculiarity which an admired writer has justly asserted often to accompany bodily malformation.

“ Well, how tides it with thee, Gaffer ?” said the esquire, by way of opening civility.

“ Ill enough, Sir Squire. I see present poverty and more making ready :—a thing neither good to sleep on, nor wake on.”

“ Truly, I believe not ; but thou hast got new comfort, in a dame, since last I saw thee.”

“ I’ve been simple enough to seek for’t,” muttered the other, with a meaning shrug, which evidently gave great umbrage in the quarter under allusion, though the stranger’s presence restrained retort.

“ Ye’ll grant me grace,” he resumed, apologizing for the seeming neglect implied by his unpostponed handicraft ; “ I’ve got my time filled here less to my will, than my need. An’ upsetting Scot has tasked me to new thong his buff jerkin ; and says, if it be not ready at his

call, he'll raise my crown in bumps like the top of Eildon. A bots on him!"

"*I ought not to complain of it,*" answered Farneley; "for, mayhap, it is most owing thereto that I have found thee at home, when so much is to be seen out of doors. And now, Linny, that I have lighted luckily, let us mingle wits a measure!"

He then condensed into a few sentences an exposition of his situation and views; inviting the jerkin-maker's opinion thereon. He had the less scruple in being open with him; in that, besides his claim for grateful return, he knew him to hate, with a perversity not singular, the very people near whom he chose to abide. In the course of their communing he elicited a few further facts, but of a nature merely to add minutiae to his previous surmises, without leading them forward. Two princes of the blood, and all the chiefs he had supposed, were actually assembled in the little chapel; and at council,

as was understood, upon the fittest route to enter England. Bleaklaw, centrically fixed upon the border, had apparently been appointed a rendezvous for that purpose; but before this very morning, its isolated cottars had no idea of witnessing such an imposing meeting.

“Tell me, Tyzack,” said Raimond, “since thou hast only like myself a shrewd guess at the bent of this embattlement, can thy cunning devise no means of learning more? The Lord Warden hath an open coffer, man, for those who do the march good service.”

“If my pouch be lined from such a store, ‘twill be for once and away,” replied Linny, sourly. “Tis small gift I’ve to hope from your lording leaders! There lives not one, o’ the whole tote, that ever did or ever will, offer *me* day bread.” He accompanied the speech with a glance, half bitter—half reckless, at his curtailed limb, and then bent over his work as if to conceal any symptoms of feeling.

“Ah! Linny. Fortune has, indeed, dealt

hardly with thee!" said Farneley, somewhat touched, as we mostly are by the involuntary plaint of a stern nature; "else thy broad back had born harness with the best. As it is ——"

"I have leave to grumble and curse her spite"—took up the other, wishing to be rid of the subject. "With regard to your question: —when I've freed my hand I'll hie abroad, and, doubtless, pick up some droppings to the point. Meanwhile, thou art hungry belike. Mab (calling to his spouse, who was busied at a window watching the stirrage without), put the bits o' trouts nimble Dickon left yestr'een to brander, and see if you can comfort a fasting stomach. I doubt, tho', you'll make a poor fend at table decking."

At the summons, Mabel came forward, and removing the fish from a hazel twig whereon they were strung, proceeded to discharge her culinary function. A word of her.—She was much younger than her husband, and moreover a straight bouncing wench; though slightly re-

commended in her coarse wyliecot, and soiled barme-cloth, or apron. But for a dishevelled superabundance of flaming red locks, and a general sluttishness of air, she might have set up some pretension to good looks. Her skin was smooth, and person plump. If her vacant countenance could be said to have any expression, it was of a lax and giddy nature.

Any one comparing the couple would have hesitated to believe that Tyzack had been the free choice of his partner; yet such was the fact. He had encountered her in her native town of Dunse during a late peregrination, and prevailed on her to leave it in his company. By “what conjuration, and what mighty magic” he gained dominion over her heart, is unknown. After all, stranger unions are continually witnessed. Whence, let those explain who understand the sympathies and attractions—the wishes and weaknesses that govern frail humanity.

Whilst Mabel hung over the peat fire, blush-

ing, not *for* but *from*, her employment, she favoured Farneley from time to time with a leering regard which showed that whatever might formerly have influenced her taste, she was now by no means insensible to the charms of fair exterior. The youth, though far from being habitually flinty to tender overtures, had, at present, no perception for such; and consequently, soon fell below par in her estimation.

"Hark ye to the clatter out bye," observed Tyzack, as the confusion of sounds increased. "I fear, Sir Squire, we may not long have the roof to ourselves. Cogs bones! if you be caught, 'twill bring us both to scathe."

"Tut! no, hope better, good Linny. My garb does not invite suspicion, and there is no reason why thou may'st not entertain a neighbour—an acquaintance—or even a wayfarer."

"Aye, aye, that way it must be; for one visit I am sure of," said Linny in a fidget. "My saucy customer will not forget me."

"Methinks, the hum we hear bespeaks the rising of their council. They will begin the march anon."

"The sooner, still the better, then," rejoined Tyzack. "Mark that, if aught should go amiss, thou art but a wandering gossip; *I* know nought more of thee. And thou, wench, see thou keep'st a watch upon thy tongue. I remember me, yon swaggerer claimed some 'quaintance with thee: —now, I redd thee, hold no prate with him."

Mabel gave her head a toss, muttering something in which the words "countryman," and "will to guide herself," only were audible. Farneley assured Linny of his intention to avoid compromising him, whatever might happen.

Even whilst he spoke, the knocking of a mailed hand upon the door, occasioned in him a slight trepidation, and made the jerkin-maker fairly forget his foregoing arrangements.

"Slip out," the latter cried, in a hurried whisper,—“slip away as ye came in. Yet—no—De'il seize the innocent! (an apostrophe to

Mabel, who had too officiously undone the latch), she's—bide still—keep thy seat, there's nought else for't."

By this time the figure of a stalworth young fellow, half armed, stood on the threshold. His guise was that of a superior follower to some chief, but hardly betokening the degree of gentility; (that is, in Farneley's eye, for no doubt the Scot boasted "gentle blude.") He had a bluff ruddy aspect, together with the hard prominent features peculiar to his nation. They breathed of reckless license and coarse self-confidence.

A brief greeting of good intelligence passed 'twixt him and the forward Mabel; after which, he advanced to the side of her ill-satisfied mate.

"Ho! Gaffer Pare-hide!" he bawled, in the loud tones generally affected by people when they use bold language; as if they found encouragement in the sound of their own voices;—"hast done my turn, man?—is the gambeson ready?"

"Not just," answered Tyzack, gruffly; for though disposed by disposition to calculate, he had a strong spirit when provoked to shew it—and was so now. "Mayhap, thou think'st no one has had a godfather but thyself. Please give me my own name, or none."

"Why, that is as it may be, my surly Jock," rejoined the former, no way abating his insolence. "What, if I take the office on myself, and have thee baptized afresh in the next burn. How wouldst relish that?—eh!"

Tyzack made no reply, but bridled his temper, and moodily pursued his task. However unrefined his mind might be, he keenly felt the bitter sense of hardship ever endured by unhappy impotence when trampled on by strength. A consequence too much disregarded—nay, too often absolutely unthought of—by brutal jokers.

The Scot did not add any thing further in the same strain. Probably, having observed Farneley, he felt his presence a sort of check. He eyed him narrowly, but gave no other sign of

notice. The hiss and odour of the frying fish next claimed interest.

“Gossip of mine,” he resumed, addressing Mabel familiarly: “thou art making savoury promise there. I would I might cry shares.”

“Ou! that thou mayst, with a welcome,” was the ready answer of the smirking female; “an’ sall ha’ the first, as ye’re may be hurried.”

“Gramercy, my daw!” replied he, looking vainly round for a place to bestow himself:—“but wist ye I bring my stool, as an old woman does to a tripe-feast?”

“Or, as unbidden comers should, to any feast,” added Linny, in a growl.

“Whew!—Never thou speak till the cat mews, then cry—hah! now comes my turn,” was the sharp slighting rejoinder.

Whilst Tyzack was brewing a retort, Mabel cast her eyes upon Raimond, who leaned thoughtfully on the only table the cabin contained. He had lost all favour in her eyes, from the cause before denoted; and even had it not been so,

she had found “metal more attractive.” “*Aut amat, aut odit mulier.*”

“Good man,” said she, stooping to his ear and *elevating her voice*, “sit ye bye a bit, while I serve Maister Ormiston here wi’ a morning chack; he has least time to spare.”

Overlooking the rudeness of the demand, Farneley, from common prudence, was about to comply quietly, when he was unexpectedly restrained by the irritated Tyzack.

“Keep thy seat, friend,” said the last-named person, assaying a dry and easy manner. “My woman is little better than a fool, and knows no touch of courtesy;—Heaven help her!”

“Heaven help *thee*, Old Crossgrain!” exclaimed the Scot. “By all its saints, she’s the better o’ the brace, both in blood and breeding!”

“Wow! Linny! what ails thee?” cried Mabel, “ye sud’na grudge a civility to Pate Ormiston. Why, man, there’s kin ’atween us.”

“Humph! aye! ye’re sib as sieve and riddle,

that grew i'the same wood together, I fancy," said Linny, with a sneer.

"Why, as to that, it is not to be spoken of," followed Ormiston, who by no means took pride in the proclaimed connexion. "Nathelless, a Merse lass should shew a soft heart to a Merse man without being called to coals."

"A soft heart, quotha!" iterated the jerkin-maker, grinning with intense bitterness. "Ou, ay! soft and yielding, I dare say."

"Whisht now, Linny! hae care o' mair, or ye'll maybe aby'e't," said Mabel, casting a spiteful skelly at Farneley. Then, turning to Ormiston, she invited him to make a settle of the simple hatch answering for bedstead.

"A goodly rout—here's for a nook o' nought!" she murmured. "Him an' his *frien'*! (emphasising the expression), I could waste a breathe would make him eat in the word, and fye at the gossipred." A meaning scowl from Linny silenced her.

Neither the unspoken admonition, nor the

inuendoes which occasioned it, escaped the notice of the observant Scot. He had just thrown himself upon the hatch, but immediately afterwards arose, and crossing the floor, stepped a single pace beyond the threshold ; as if to look for some thing, or person, in the crowded road. He was then seen to beckon to a knot of comrades. Whatever his motive, it was evidently a sudden one ; albeit, that his manner was rather leisurely than otherwise.

There was nothing demonstrative in the movement ;—it might have had a foreign object ;—but Farneley, with that remarkable intuition which so impressively instructs us at such times, knew at once it had relation to himself. He felt he was suspected, and threatened with, at least, a scrutiny ; the which he had reason to consider tantamount to detection. Life, therefore, was at stake.

So convinced, and being one of those decided characters who never *throw away* a chance, however forlorn, the thought of flight by his original

mode of entry instantly crossed his brain. The door stood favourably a-jar, and that completed the impulse. Without a word, he darted towards it—cleared the outlet, and sped:—alas ! not far. He presently found himself grasped, and firmly detained by the flowing sleeve of his frock. He turned, and beheld the too-prompt Ormiston.

“ Whither away so fast, Jockie ?” the latter chuckled,—“ leaving thy nuncheon, too ! that must needs be for reasons of mark, or I’m no son of St. Andrew. Ha !—what’s this I feel ? —Graith, under thy gown ! Ho, ho ! I did smoke a fox, but find I’ve sprung a wolf.” A brief, but nervous struggle, ensued.

“ Nay, yield thee, man !” cried the Scot, well nigh out of wind. “ Thou’rt a pretty boy enough; but ’tis no use striving with a dozen buirdly Merse carles upon thy back. See, they are here.”

Raimond looked up, and seeing that such overpowering force really was closing upon him, surrendered without further contest.

CHAPTER IV.

Unhappy Squire, what hard mishap thee brought,
Into this bay of peril?

SPENSER.

AFTER yielding to a might against which it would have been a mode of suicide to have offered resistance, Farneley was re-conducted into the apartment which supplied “kitchen, parlour, and hall,” to his humble ally, the jerkin-maker. When there, he was roughly and unceremoniously bound ; for, in those days, the polite art of stripping durance of its vileness, as modernly practised *by scale of fees*, was not understood even by official myrmidons ; from rude soldiers no touch of it could be expected.

Great haste marked all the proceedings of his captors ; evidently occasioned by a general

movement of the army calling the men to their posts. Two were left ultimately to guard him in the hovel, whilst Ormiston and the rest departed ; the former, to take instructions from his superiors.

Tyzack and his spouse maintained a distant aspect towards the unlucky esquire, no doubt wishing to have it supposed, that they did not participate in his designs. The man's manner was, indeed, somewhat subdued ; but the woman, self-accused of compromising her husband's safety by the licence of her tongue, now used the same organ to create a counter-balancing impression. Like most silly people, however, she had barely cunning enough to devise a feint, but wanted tact to make it plausible.

Some time elapsed ere Ormiston re-appeared, during which the two jackmen audibly cursed the delay that kept them backward in the bustle abroad. When he did return, it was mounted and with lance in rest. Riding up in front of the cabin, he commanded the prisoner to be

immediately brought forth ; accosting him, personally, in loud imperative accents. “ Bestir thyself, sirrah ! ” he cried, when the other stepped into the road. “ There lies thy path. Foot it forward, and briskly, if thou hast no will to brook the point of my gad in thy flanks.”

“ Thou art a bold ruffler in safe consort, and with a hand-fast enemy,” retorted Farneley, with cool contempt. “ Prithee, reserve thy bluster for the first stout Northumbrian you meet in open field.”

“ Sayst thou ! John Englisher ! ” rejoined the Scot, raising a forced laugh. “ I would the same were the best of thy kin ! I’d score my mark upon his back.”

“ Like enough ;—thou wilt not dare to look him in the *face*.”

“ I’ll do it soon—and to his cost, natheless.”

“ Aye ! when you catch him sleeping, or bound, as I am now.”

Ormiston, much provoked, issued a volley of abusive epithets, which Farneley disregarded,

passively pacing on in the direction pointed to him. He habitually despised idle bravado, and disliked prolonged wrangling on any subject.

As they wended to the quarter indicated by the Scot, which appeared to be that of the chapel before spoken of, the esquire had opportunity to remark an intelligible change in the disposition of the hostile multitude; or rather, indications which exhibited its tactics ripened to maturity. One dense and formidable column, the rear whereof had already cleared the village, could be traced streaming in long continuous line towards the hills of Northumberland; but the bulk of the armament was assembled in masses to the westward, as if destined for a different parallel of operations. The first body, though much the lesser, evidently comprised the *élite* of the whole host; as was evident from its great strength in efficient men-at-arms, as well as from the number of knightly pennons which danced along its extent. Bleaklaw itself was now much less occupied than heretofore,

and was becoming every instant further emptied ; all parties verging to join one or other of the above corps. Upon Farneley, both a practised soldier and well acquainted with the condition of the borders, the demonstrations visible were not lost : he immediately, and as it proved rightly, guessed, that separate expeditions were intended to sweep, at the same time, the eastern and western marches of England.

Near the chapel, but apparently just about to sever company, still lingered a limited group of the distinguished party that had lately been congregated therein. The Lion of Scotland, rampant upon a standard borne by an esquire, proclaimed the quality of some person or persons present. These the experienced could easily identify by the blazonry upon the housings of their steeds ; if not by a certain deference shewn towards them by the remainder. They were, in fact, the Earls of Fife and Strathearn, sons to King Robert, and, nominally at least, commandant over this great gathering of

arms. In attendance, may be specialized, Sir William Douglas, of Liddesdale, a veteran warrior, uncle to *the* Douglas; and the Earl of Moray, brother to the restless Dunbar.

Before these personages Farneley was conducted, but found them, as he was at first gladdened to observe, little inclined to take concern about him. The marshalled bands awaited their respective leaders, and these, in turn, were equally impatient to join them. So insignificant a circumstance, as the seizure of a lurking English hind, was not, therefore, likely to interest very deeply. After a few questions, the drift whereof being more to learn how far the English march was alarmed than to inculpate the prisoner himself, the rough old knight of Liddesdale broke in upon the examination.

“Come, my lords,” he cried, “let us ride. The moments we waste over this stubborn loon, are tenfold worth the fullest tale his tongue can tell were it glib as gallows-doom can make it.”

“Thou art right, i’faith ! Sir William,” re-

inforced the Earl of Stratherne. “ This is loitering to pick a grain from the road side, whilst the ripe harvest waits our sickle. Brother, give the word, away ! or the beacons will blaze from Solway to the Mersey, ere we have passed the mosses.”

“ Why let them,” said the elder prince, “ we’ll shame them in woeful kind, I warrant me. Albeit, I stay not willingly. What order shall we take with this rambling Jack ?”

“ Oh ! hang him ! leave his deserts to Moray’s judging,” said the old knight ; “ he may delay a space, tho’ we cannot.”

“ Then, indeed, he’s like enough to hang,” observed Fife. “ But, be it so. My Lord of Moray, be pleased to take this charge ; and sith you incline to ride with Douglas, rather than with us, we give thee farewell ! Have with me, friends !—the spur for Cumberland !”

No more passed. The princes and their train struck directly off, leaving behind only Moray and his immediate followers.

This chieftain was an impersonation of most of the darker shades which characterized his ferocious class. Wilful and vindictive himself, he believed the same sentiments to exist in every breast. Thus, from a mistaken rage for retaliation, full more than from a purely sanguinary spirit, he oft committed cruel acts. A perverse wrong-headedness was continually leading him to imagine occasions, wherein he stood self-warranted to play the demon, under the idea of playing the man:—that is, such a man as he conceived an independent chieftain ought to be. Indeed, it is scarce worthy of remark, that there never lived a being so accursed in temper, whose waywardness was not sustained by some feverish distorted conceit, which, to his own ill-regulated mind, raised a transient justification.

He was still young; in person tall and commanding, and of what the admirers of stern beauty might call a fine mien. Great animal energy was there depicted, but accompanied by

traits that did not recommend to gentle esteem. “So, Sir Landraker,” he began, turning a keen scintillating gray eye upon Farneley, and compressing his lips after the manner of a person who resolves not to be trifled with—“Thou would’st keep a close mouth upon us, would’st thou? have a care man; have a care!”

“I am but a simple man, as thou mayst see, my lord, and cannot speak beyond my knowledge,” answered Farneley.

“Thy looks belye thy words, springald. Besides, my henchman spoke of mail beneath thy gown, and (thrusting on the instant the butt of his lance against the esquire’s breast) if there’s faith in sound, he spoke right truly.”

The ringing answer to the blow was irrefutable, but Farneley still attempted evasion. He knew it would be madness to acknowledge his real commission, and possessed too much practical sense to task his courage in a desperate case.

“It is not strange,” said he, “that those

who come abroad in a wild country should take some defence 'gainst evil chances. I confess I have done so; I confess I am not of Scottish birth. What then? 'tis not the wont of warriors to mistreat the peaceful wayfarer."

" Prate not, sir knave, but tell me direct—what did'st thou *here* beyond the English territory?"

" I knew not I was here beyond it," replied the esquire, sincerely, but injudiciously.

" Ho! you did not?" said Moray, with an ominous drawl, " we'll acquaint thee with the landmark; and that, in such fashion, thou shalt not err again. Well, Sir Henchman! what ha'st got to say?"

The concluding question was addressed to our acquaintance Ormiston, who, with Tyzack and Mable in custody, had tacitly invited attention.

" I have brought here, my lord, the crafty carle that gave the Englisher harbourage; mayhap, if it like you to task him, he may content your doubts."

His lord returned a nod of approbation, and forthwith proceeded to catechize Tyzack as to his cognizance of the affair.

The jerkin-maker, elevating himself upon his sound limb, and entwining its defective fellow round his staff for a support, replied to every question with a steady, stolid aspect. He professed utter ignorance of his late guest, except as a passing stranger, who had claimed temporary rest and refreshment, with proffer of guerdon.

“Out on it!” exclaimed Moray, his impatience taking the stronger vent, in that it had been hitherto somewhat restrained. “Am I to be detained behind my knightly peers by such a trumpery cavil as this—and would be cozened? By the rood! Prickers; beat me these two rascaille cheats, and soundly. Thwack ‘em with your gad-staves till they come to duty. As for the younger, if you leave him a sounder body than his crippled ‘complice, you spare a rank foe to Scotland.”

This harsh and unfeeling order was about to have been executed by vassals to whom a breath was a law, when Ormiston, who had for the last few minutes been in close confab with Mabel, thrust himself again forward.

“ My lord,” said he, “ the good wife here bids me ask you spare her gaffer’s bones, and she will possess you with all you wish to know.”

“ An’ she *can*, she *shall*. Hither gammer ! Out with thy story ?”

Hereupon Mabel drew near, and disclosed the true state of facts. Though she could not be suspected of any very violent affection for her spouse, she was still enough of the wife to conclude by an earnest petition for his pardon.

“ Away with him, then, I care not for the mome,” were the words which conveyed a contemptuous assent.

“ ‘Tis as I suspected, after all !” ejaculated the chief, turning a deeply louring brow upon Farneley. “ Thou, sirrah, art then an emissary

sent to do the work of the hot-blooded English Warden?"

The esquire, conscious that policy could now avail no more, erected his person, and resumed the bold front he had for a season been induced to forego. He returned Moray's frowning scrutiny with an unblenching glance.

"I fight for king Richard," said he, proudly, "and in his service obey Sir Henry Percy—Hotspur, you, and most Scots have heard of him." The latter words were enunciated to convey a meaning fully caught by the fiery hearer.

"Varlet—minion!" he vociferated. "Darest thou to taunt a Scottish noble?"

"I have spoken to a quick comprehension. The name moves thee."

"As would the owner did he stand before me. By the shored cross of St. Andrew, I will be fain to meet the mad-brain! he lacks a lesson."

"He may, seeing that he has never had a master."

Moray scowled upon the fearless speaker, and handled for a moment the heavy sperthe at his saddle-bow, as if well nigh moved to be himself the executioner of vengeance. To account for his extreme ire, it is sufficient to say, that he had more than one reminiscence of discomfiture angrily freshened.

“Thou should’st have a stout heart, whipster, to venture thus to beard the Moray ;” said he grimly ; “but feel for it, boy, and hold it firm, for thy last sand is running. Were it but to put outrance ’twixt thy lord and me, thou shalt die the death.”

These were awful sounds, and uttered by no trifler, but Raimond bore them worthily. His condition of humanity might internally shudder, yet did not the spirit of the trained warrior quail.

“Do thy worst,” said he steadily. “To God I bequeath my soul, and to Percy, the duty of revenge !”

“Ormiston,” growled Moray, in a deep husky

voice, that bespoke the fixed ruthlessness of his intentions, “ I must forward. To thee I leave the charge of dealing fate upon this Englishman. Drag him, bound as he is, to yonder burn ;—throw him into its deepest eddy ;—and see that your lances aid the bubbling water in its work. I promised to learn him well where *we* do fix our boundary, and have not forgotten it. When my behest is done, his blood will tinge the line. Would it were ever ruddy from such veins !”

A womanish wail issued from the lips of the weak-headed Mabel, and something like a suppressed groan from those of the few villagers who gaped around, at the horrid doom thus summarily pronounced. They were, however, more touched by the youth and prepossessing exterior of the victim, than startled at an occurrence, shocking in itself, but unhappily not strange.

This was unnoticed by the boiling-blooded chieftain, and disregarded by his brutal vassals. The first, indeed, immediately quitted the spot;

and of the last, only Ormiston and a chosen few remained. The earl's party, proceeding at a gallop on the track of the eastward verging column, was soon lost in distance.

The frightful penalty now about to be visited upon the unlucky and too adventurous Farneley, was one no way unusual in the lawless times, and amongst the fierce race of which we write. The nearest tree, or the nearest pool (*fossa et furca*) were then indifferently made the instruments of, what would doubtless be called justice. With such a custom, our common saw—"that he who is born to hang, will never drown," would lose its chief application.

Raimond was not peculiarly gifted with the indurated nerves—the phlegmatic stoicism which enables some men to look the "grisly king" in the face with entire composure—neither was the suddenness of his approach calculated to lessen the involuntary throes of nature in such an awful situation. The truant blood, might, therefore, leave his cheek a little pale; but, fortified by

mental intrepidity, and the high sense of manhood begot by his martial associations, he sustained a firm and noble carriage under this, the severest of all trials.

“ Englishman !” said Ormiston, terminating a momentary pause which succeeded the departure of Moray ; “ thy minutes are of the briefest. If thou hast ought to do, or say,—be speedy.”

“ Something, I have,” returned Farneley ; a slight quivering of his lip, denoting rather a gush of mournful retrospections than an accession of personal tremors ; “ ‘tis not much.” Here, casting round an inquiring look, his regards fell upon the caustic visage of Tyzack, now relaxed by unequivocal signs of sorrow. “ Leonard,” he resumed, “ thou hast heard of Miles Farneley, of the Newcastle ?”

“ I have—he was Tynedale bred.”

“ He was. Wilt thou here promise me, by the Holy Rood ! to hie thee to his dwelling with the last sad remembrance of his son ?”

“ I will—I will !” croaked the affected cripple.

" Oh ! Master Farneley, I trust you blame me not, because of yonder idiot's doings. I'd ha' borne a hundred beatings ere it should ha' come to this."

" I believe thee, Linny ; and did I not, my hour of enmity is past—to all. The thought reminds me of a further wish I fear cannot be granted me."

" And what is that ?" demanded Ormiston, to whom Farneley had, in some sort, by a mechanical action, addressed his concluding aspiration.

" The blessing and counsel of a holy man."

" That, indeed, thou canst not have," was the prompt rejoinder. " See !" he continued, speaking to his fellows, " already does the rearward of our army draw from sight. Archie, do thou dismount and lift the prisoner to thy seat, then, up behind. The water lies upon our way, so let us on. Come, Sir Southron, we bide no longer."

" You must, you shall !" interposed a mild

but sonorous voice. “ I understood this devoted being to call for the succours of the church. In the name of that church and all its blessed Saints ! I command ye, permit him his request ? ”

The speaker, upon whom every eye instantly turned, proved to be the officiating priest of the adjoining chantry ; who, attracted from his cell, had just caught the import of the occasion. He was a grave, ascetical Dominican, with a beard, broad and spreading, after what was called the “ cathedral ” style. He took post before Ormiston with all the dignified assurance of the tonsure. That individual, though somewhat awed, was still disposed to remonstrate.

“ Holy father,” said he, “ this man has been ordered to the death by the Lord of Moray, my master ; empowered to deal with him, as well in his own right, as by word of license from the Earl of Fife. It will be at our proper peril, should we postpone a duty over which we have been, as it is, too long detained.”

"If he hath been judged as thou sayest," rejoined the monk, "it belongs not to me to question your final deed. But in regard to the unhappy one's demand to taste the comforts of my sacred function, it cannot be withheld. Nay, oppose not. On the salvation of thy everlasting soul!—if thou would'st have thy steps uncursed on earth! I charge thee leave him to me, for a time."

The power of ignorant superstition, if not a sense of religious reverence, prevailed.

"Well, father, for one half glass, I maynot, perhap, gainsay—after, not an instant. By my life!" he continued, pointing to the far receding lances; "we'll have blown horses, mates, before we o'ertake company."

If ever a minister of God's high altar appears to marked advantage, it is in performing acts like the foregoing. There is something at once grateful and imposing in the idea of a reverend man, himself purified from, and elevated above, human passions, standing forth betwixt weak-

ness and power; between the enraged avenger and the suppliant culprit; reconciling, or rebuking enemies; crossing either, even in the height of anger, yet respected and obeyed by both, from the mere conviction of his universal benevolence and paternal care for all. Turbulent and unprincipled as men may be,—rancorous as may be the spirit with which they, at times, pursue each other,—they are still chastened by a common disposition to admire, and, as it were, repose on, such patriarchal mediators. What a pity their existence should be more a *beau ideal*, than a spectacle of experience!

The zealous monk led Farneley into the interior of his cell; whereabout, whilst they pursued their devotions, the ill-contented Scots kept a vigilant watch.

In the interim, our attention is demanded elsewhere.

CHAPTER V.

Jog on, friend, there's a porter's lodge else,
And dog-whips kept for saucy comers.

GRATEFUL SERVANT.

NOEL SPALDING, the gray friar whom we last saw hurrying off upon the steed of the Northumbrian esquire, was a character curiously at variance with the times in which he flourished. Son to the manciple of a religious community, he had been bred a monk, without any disposition of his own towards a life of holiness and celibacy. He had, indeed, a distaste for the moping restrictions of the cloister and was a despiser of musty rules. It is, therefore, not strange that he ultimately forsook the warm and peaceful foundation on which he had

been nurtured, and attached himself to the more congenial, because unsettled, fraternity of St. Francis.

He was, however, by no means insensible to the substantial duties of his calling ; and was as far fitted for it as a thirst and aptitude for clerical learning could make him. Before his restless inclinations caused him to wander, he had become reasonably imbued with all the *wisdom*, distilled to Europe by the “subtle, irrefragable, and ineffable,” doctors of his century.

From the roving nature of his life, he had come much in contact with the poorer yeomanry, for whom the peculiar turn of his mind gave him a predilection : whilst the powerful class of feudal palatines, he hated by an obvious rebound. A clearness of perception, which, looking to the period, may be termed precocious, led him to view with disgust the prevailing usurpations of man over man, and enabled him to detect the emptiness of the knightly and priestly *dogmata* wherewith they were main-

tained. Bearing such a spirit, and of an obstinate temper, it may easily be surmised that his conduct would often invite contumelies tending to confirm and intensify his sentiments. And what served to estrange him, even from the church itself, he had embraced the then spreading doctrines of Wickliffe the reformer.

Thus constituted and opinionated, it is not matter of wonder that Noel should have made one of those broken priests, who, by their preachings and incitement, had a few years before roused the populace under Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and others, into the enormities then committed. Marked for his share in these transactions, he had fled to Scotland: whence we find him now returning; partly in the hope that his person and conduct were forgotten at home, and partly that he had there also contrived to render residence dangerous.

Raimond Farneley, as being the retainer of a great feudatory, was not precisely the sort of person to engage the regard of Spalding, yet,

nevertheless, he had done it in a considerable degree. First, a certain bland and confiding manner had disarmed the other's prejudices; and secondly, the name of his lord contained a commanding charm. The Earl of Northumberland had been, as is well known, a generous protector to the enlightened divine of Lutterworth, and the fact was approvingly remembered by the Franciscan; coupled with a hope that he might secure some such favour for himself. When, therefore, he undertook the office charged on him by the esquire, it was with a sincere determination to execute it to the best of his ability. Nay, more, he saw the youth set off on his hazardous enterprize with a real interest in his success.

Of this, if the undue lapse of time did not fairly warrant a doubt, the same was soon forcibly suggested in another way. Fore-scouring spears gradually straggled into his view, and their advance quickly became too unequivocal to leave him any choice of proceeding. He gave

up the esquire as lost, and prepared to perform the ulterior clause of his instructions. Mounting, then, the mettled animal he held, he urged him, with awkward method, to his speed ; and thanks to the unwonted lightness of an unmailed rider, it was such as presently defied pursuit.

With praiseworthy endurance, for it was much to his bodily detriment, the friar kept up his gallop until the broken surface of the waste country he traversed compelled him to relax. A new embarrassment then assailed him. There was no visible track, and he was totally ignorant of the land-marks which directed the few who had occasion to use them. Not one solitary boor could he detect in sight, of whom to ask information. Still he pressed on, hoping, at any rate, in time, to arrive at some peel or village where he might be forwarded in his novel expedition. Hours, however, slipped away without his nearing any such haven ; and, after all, on noticing the forms of the surrounding

hills, he had reason to suspect he had latterly been making only an unprofitable circuit.

At length, whilst driving up an ascent, from which he expected to improve his prospect, he gladly hailed a horseman crossing its brow and coming down towards him. They speedily closed together.

The stranger proved a hard-featured hirsute fellow, with long sprawling limbs, but great apparent sinew. His physiognomy by no means indicated creditable propensities; yet at the same time avouching nothing villainous. He was invested in a rusty iron cap and plate jack; and carried in his hand an extremely long gad, or lance. From a leathern girdle round his loins depended a straight heavy sword, and also a pouch and knife. The horse that bore him, an active dun gelding, had a sheep's skin thrown over it in the way of housing, though probably employed for some purpose of humble utility. Its own coat was almost equally rough. The wild looks of the man, his uncared-for equip-

ment, unpolished arms, and the locality itself, apprised Spalding that he beheld a free snatcher of the dales.

“ ‘Slife! sir gray gown,’ ” cried this wight, reining up in front of the friar in such manner as to force him to do the like. “ Ride ye on the devil’s post, or St. Dunstan’s, that ye clatter on at such a pace, and in such trim? hey !”

“ Be not irreverent, friend,” answered Noel. “ Or, if thou wilt name a blessed saint in the same breath with the father of evil, at least give the first precedence.”

“ Why that is but fair, I beg his saintship’s grace! What dost thou on the mosses ?”

“ In good sooth! I do an office for which I have had little preparation. Prithee, possess me with the nearest road to Alnwick ?”

The borderer’s embrowned leathery visage darkened.

“ So ho,” he exclaimed, “ then, mayhap, thou art a hound of the Warden’s pack, out on scent after the doings of honest livers here. I

marvel you should not know your way, and more, that thou should'st ask it from Hugh of Hawden!"

"Rude Sir of Hawden, you mistake: though a poor clerk, I serve no master but Him in Heaven."

The free pricker, who had been narrowly eyeing the animal that bore the other, here interrupted him.

"I have been noting thy nag," said he, "and find his points familiar. But a day gone, I saw him bestrode by one for whom I ought to have some liking. Well I wot thou art not he."

"The steed is, indeed, not mine. Would the true owner had him at this moment, to do the behest on which I now am bent."

"Um! where then is he?"

"I fear in bad hands."

"How say'st thou?" demanded the self-heralded Hugh, apparently concerned by the intelligence. "Speak fully of him, man; I have more care in this than thou may'st think."

Spalding complied, giving a hasty summary of the morning's events ; wherein the dalesman seemed, by his anxious questions, to take both a general and a special interest.

" 'Sblood and bones !" he at last muttered, " here is a seething-pot about to leap the brim ! a scalding drench to wash the English march ! So great a force abroad will hardly leave a single Hab in homestead ; on the border lands at least. There's work for thee, Hugh."

" And for more beside," said Spalding.
" Come, speed me on my course."

" Why aye, there is good cause !" returned Hugh, his manner changing into friendly zeal. " See'st thou yon double piked law ? make to it : that passed, thou wilt find, now house—now hall to lend thee aid and furtherance. On, on ! God 'eild thee ! my path shapes elsewhere."

They separated ; the friar resuming his former pace, the borderer darting away at such an increased one, as shewed that a new impetus had been given to his movements.

When Spalding reached the crown of the eminence last indicated to him, he obtained, as he was bid to expect, a view over a more level and promising country. In the midst thereof, and not at any great distance, rose a building, which, like all mansions of any importance in this turbulent region, had the appearance of a little fortalice. The track he believed himself bound to pursue (for he *could* now trace some such thing) swept within a few furlongs of it. Thither, therefore, he immediately conceived the notion of resting for a brief while; as well to refresh himself and animal, as to warn the castellain, whoever he might be, of the impending mischief.

The little strong-hold consisted of but one irregular tower, based in the midst of some inferior defences, and surrounded by a moat: which latter, owing to the drought of the season, was almost dry. Its foundations occupied the centre of a smooth elevation, swelling gradually out of the adjoining plain. The gentle slopes

of this afforded grateful pasturage, and were at present scattered o'er with black cattle. A few rugged stunted trees also diversified these inclines, and broke pleasantly the otherwise insipid hill of green sward.

Noel, as has been hinted, was no lover of great men's halls, and would willingly have passed this by, but that the cravings of nature were reinforced by the duties of patriotism. As it was, he pricked roundly towards the gate. In his progress he met with more difficulty than he had bargained for, owing to the starting and running of the unruly herd grazing around, among which he had occasion to use his staff pretty lustily. The exercise did not tend to dulcify or moderate a humour already overwrought on by the pressure of his mission. No sooner, therefore, did he reach the barbican, than he proceeded, both by voice and hand, to raise a vehement call upon the indwellers.

A division of the great portal incontinently opened, and a sleek, saucy-faced man, in a long

blue gown and badge, with a porter's headed staff in hand, stood in the vacancy.

The friar's appearance has been before characterized as equivocal; at this moment, mounted on the charger of a man at arms, soiled and perspiring with travel, it was doubly so, and certainly excused the offensive scrutiny which the porter thought proper to bestow upon him.

"Thou clamourest mighty loudly," said the latter, "and thy knocking is somewhat of the hardest. What may be thy demand?"

"What place is this, and who it's lord?"

"The tower of Corsenside, and —— pshaw? I am beside myself to answer? Was this all thy business?"

"No; I claim the usages of hospitality."

"By the sailing boat* of St. Cuthbert! thou art a right worshipful person, to shake a noble knight's gates on their hinges, with so free a

* The remains of the Saint are said to have voyaged down the Tweed in a *stone coffin*.

guest, yet not e'en know his name. Who, and what art *thou*, i' the fiend's name?"

" It matters not to *thee*. The portal key is thy charge, look to it, and no more. Admit me to thy lord, and straightway."

" That threadbare gown will hardly be thy passport."

" Sir Porter, I have business 'twill be costly to delay. Once more I say, let me have speech of thy lord."

" Methinks the seneschal may do thy turn."

" Well, be it the seneschal then; only chaffer no longer, but bring him to me, or me to him."

" Nay, thou shalt stay without, wer't but to teach thee manners. I'll bring him to thee, sith it must be so."

Then, churlishly leaving the friar at the gate, the porter disappeared to seek the functionary in question; doubtless highly affronted at the imperative tone held by one whom he considered so unworthy to use it.

He returned unexpectedly soon, attending a

tall old man, plainly attired in a long close cassock of murrey coloured cloth, girded round the loins with a silken cord, from which depended a purse of the same materials. His head was covered by a cap of minever, not very new, and his silver locks escaping from under it in abundance,

“—— proved the years his front dissembled well.”

Powerful, indeed, must his frame once have been, for it looked so, even in its decay. His cheek was still ruddy, though with a broken colour; and his eye peered lively from beneath a white and shaggy penthouse. Thick but silvery mustachios fringed his upper lip, and gave a kind of martial severity to a venerable visage.

Now this as it chanced, was the lord of the domain himself, who, disturbed by the noise, had met and interrogated the porter in the court-yard. Being of a hasty, irascible temperament, and receiving from his servant an unmeasured

account of the stranger's conduct, he had been moved to approach in person.

"Ho, la!" he exclaimed, on gaining sight of Spalding, "why 'tis the same runagate lout we noted but now, playing a mad coranto 'mongst the nolt. Think'st thou we keep an hostel, knave, that, drunk already, thou should'st brawl for more about our doors?"

Noel, viewing the person before him only as the superior domestic that had been named to him, was ill disposed to tolerate this mode of address. His ever-sturdy love of independence at this, as oft at other times, shewed almost like a weakness. "Be not uncivil, friend," he replied, in the hard dry manner that had become habitual to him, "My coming merits thanks and not abuse."

"Gad's mercy!" interjected the old cavalier; who, from having lost his two front teeth (the rest being singularly strong and sound), spurted out his words somewhat indistinctly; here's a perked up dawcock! What, in Our Lady's name!

do we see? A highway-tinker, guised like a preaching friar. 'Twere no ill deed to task thee to a homily."

"The reading would be wasted on thine ear," retorted Spalding, fretting under so tantalizing and unprofitable a colloquy.

"Mayhap—e'en though that gray gown wert thy own."

"It bespeaks my calling, truly."

"Ha, ha! Perchance it does—after a sort. As liar clinks with friar, and, some say, means the same."

"Old man!" cried Spalding, out of patience, "if thy sense be not scant as thy courtesy, list to me a moment."

"Old man!—list to *thee*!" echoed the supposed seneschal, in a paroxysm of rage. "Be-shrew my heart! this lacks discipline. Thou vile patch; thou scrubby gallows cheat, darest thou to slip thy tongue at one of my degree? Ho, there! grooms! varlets! out, drag me this

fellow down—fling him into the moat—hoist him on a cowl-staff. Quick, quick, I say.”

Thus he stormed and vociferated, until several lusty servitors appeared, all apparently ready enough to obey his mandates.

The friar, who saw no opening for parley, wisely drew off. Getting to a prudent distance, he hesitated what course to pursue; but passion soon decided on striking forward, at all chances. His bitter mood, however, would not allow him to depart without an appropriate valediction.

“A hungry traveller’s malison on your churlish hearts, ye overfed dogs in the manger!” he shouted, scornfully tossing his hand. “Ye’ll mayhap, wail to-morrow o’er the paltry cheer ye’ve saved to-day; and yelp in your kennel like brachs, as ye are. Mark me, old clay-brain—mark me, I say.”

After thus venting his spleen, he hastened away; unconscious that the furious indignation he had excited, was fated to produce further results.

“ Do I hear aright ?” roared the inflamed lord of the place. “ Does the rascaille hind fling menace at us ? Mark thee ! aye, that I will—o'er the pate. By oak and by ash ! he shall not 'scape in a sound skin. Eh ! a horse bitted !—that's lucky ! Porter, thy staff.”

As the above hurried sentences import, the irate old cavalier, bent on vengeance, seized and mounted the horse of a retainer which chanced to stand saddled in the court yard ; and snatching his porter's baton, issued forth, himself to pursue the retiring party.*

The friar had ridden to some distance, and had almost forgotten the late fracas in a deep cogitation upon the unusual service he was called on to perform, when a loud angry cry from behind, apprized him of evil yet in store.

* The “monk's stone,” an antiquity near Tynemouth, marks the spot where an epicurean priest was overtaken and belaboured to death by a knight of the Delaval family ; in whose household the party had taken a provoking liberty.—That is, he had cut off and carried away the head of a pig, roasting for the knight's dinner. The stone bears this inscription :—“ Oh ! horror, horror ! to kill a man for a pigges head !”

Looking round, he perceived the fierce old man, cantering after him, and gesticulating in a manner abundantly significant of his intentions. Now, father Noel, independent of being by his cloth a man of peace, considered care for his own person a point of true wisdom. He was certainly not a timid man, but he had learnt to care little about making a *show* of manhood, when discretion points out a simpler road to safety. He, therefore, immediately quickened pace, and strove to outride the threatened visitation. To the scoffs and revilings hurled after him, he turned a deaf ear, and continued to press on, until the drooping powers of his, now fatigued horse, compelled him to relax.

“ Ha ! lozel ;” cried his pursuer, detecting his case, “ has thy stolen bargain failed thee at last ? Prepare thy shoulders ; they shall sustain it roundly.”

Finding prospects thus altered, Spalding “ made a virtue of necessity,” and wheeled round to confront the comer.

“What means this violent approach?” he demanded, with aspect studiedly calm and severe. “Was it not enough to drive me fasting from thy gates, without hunting me down thus, like a beast of the field? Wherein have I deserved this treatment at thy hands?”

“Wherein!” iterated the other, gasping from rage and effort. “Is it nought with thee to pass indignity upon noble knights in their own holds?”

“So, then,” said Spalding, contriving to keep the other at bay, “thou art —”

“John Coupland, of Coupland, who will make thee rue to the last day of thy life, using a mala-pert tongue before a knight-banneret of King Edward’s making.”

So saying, the sturdy old knight made a succession of attempts to close upon and smite the friar; which the latter evaded with great difficulty, parrying one or two wild blows with his travelling staff.

“Beware, sir knight,” cried Spalding, still

swerving from the other's assaults, “ how you lay finger on an inviolate priest. Till now, I knew thee not; and unknowing, meant thee well. Be patient! and I may yet convince thee!”

“ Not till I've convinced thy carcass of the weight of a stout truncheon, when used with a good will. I'll lounder thee the more, that thou should'st ween to play the gleek on my credulity.”

“ Then, by Our Lady! if I forget my order, and smite again, the sin be on thy head;” said Noel, bracing up for the encounter.

“ Ha, ha! 'twill lie lightly,” rejoined the knight, only the more provoked at what he deemed an impudent perseverance in imposture.

A right earnest cudgel match must surely have ensued betwixt these ill-assorted disputants, had not the friar, moved by some foreign object which just then caught his optics, put in another “ *nolle prosequi*. ”

“ Perverse—passion-led old man,” he exclaimed, “ hold! for thine own weal's sake! If thou wilt shut thine ears, a different sense must

teach thee. Behold!—look backward, and collect the caution *I* would before have 'wakened ere it be too late."

The knight, not so much crediting the words, as yielding to the curious impulse, which, in such cases, compels indulgence, glanced over his shoulder in the direction pointed to by the friar, and certainly saw appearances that took instant effect on him.

"Gad's life!" he exclaimed, "I *do* see something beside my liking. What means it all? —canst tell?"

"I can. It means that the shepherd strays from the fold, whilst the wild wolf is at the wicket:—that, thy vassals spy an enemy, and have their lord to seek. Here comes some of them to say as much."

"By my fay! I believe thou liest none now, knave," returned the knight, completely commanded by a new stimulus. And, here make some of my people sure enough—in pressing haste too. Tell me, sirrah! what, in sooth,

bodes yon plump of spears. God's peace ! but they come on apace ! Speak, man, and swith."

Spalding answered the demand according to his belief; and added also a suggestion that Sir John should forward less wearied harbingers than himself, as well to the Lord Warden, as elsewhere.

" Scald knave !" reproached the knight, " teldest thou me *now*, what I should do, when I behold my very tower itself beset. Thou shalt howl for this anon. Move back with me —I may not idle here."

" Nay, you will not stay my pregnant errand?"

" Ha, ha ! thou hast well proved thy fitness for't ! It shall be given to trustier hands : we do not part so soon."

At this juncture, several of the knight's retainers, hastily armed and mounted, galloped up, confirming the fact of the Scots' approach, which, indeed, was too palpable to require added asseverance.

" For the love of Heaven, Sir John," urged

the foremost, “hasten in. The Lady Amise pains after thee, and Bertram Mouboucher rampages about like a bear in a ring. The Scots are o'er Corsin-law already.—A black dole on them!”

Sir John was not slow to obey the entreaty; first, however, selecting two or three of his men, upon whom he imposed the duty of conveying forward the alarm. He also directed another to seize Spalding's rein, and force him along in the retrograde.

“No parley, cullion!” he exclaimed, in answer to the friar's remonstrances, “time cries against it. Be passive, if you would not be searched from breast to back with a lance's point.”

Spalding, having no alternative, submitted; and the main party, at utmost speed, retraced the way to Corsinside.

CHAPTER VI.

Trumpets are sounding,
War steeds are bounding,
A' the blue bonnets are over the border.

SIR W. SCOTT.

Comest thou to rob my house unman'd
And spoil myself that cannot thee withstand ?

* * * *
— doubt not but that some better knight
Will it avenge and pay thee with thy right.

SPENSER.

BEFORE proceeding with the adventure, it is meet to bestow more formal notice on the irascible and peremptory old cavalier, whose part in it has been somewhat prominent.

Sir John de Coupland, Lord of Coupland, Ogle, and Corsinside, was an ancient warrior, of fame not unsung amongst the northern minstrels. His

possessions were extensive, and in personal estimation he stood high. More than forty years ago, he had performed a “*gest*,” which secured him, not merely ballad but historic celebrity:—this was the capture of David, King of Scotland, at the battle of the Red-hills, commonly called Neville’s-cross. The exploit cost him the best teeth of rather a boasted set, but he was never heard to complain of the loss; for the occasion both raised him to early honour, and improved his fortunes. Since then, few conflicts of any note had occurred between the home countries wherein he had not been engaged. In the almost constant wars of two generations he had borne a part, whereof he was excuseably proud; and so vigorous did he yet continue, that he had not abandoned the notion of still taking the field, should events call for it. But, perchance, inclination over-rated power.

The many rough scenes, with which so long a career of commotion must have brought this man in contact, and through which he had passed unscathed, leads one to ponder a little over the

current of things we generally find equalizing chances between the daring and the fearful. May it not be, that, as opposition bends to a strong spirit and swells upon a weak one, the aggregate of danger challenged by boldness is not greater than that *forced* upon timidity.

The world—as a quaint saying has it—had both gained and lost, through the agency of de Coupland; or in plain terms, he had both killed men and begot children. Of these latter, one only remained to him;—a daughter; passing fair, and likely to be passing rich. On her, he rested his hopes of perpetuating the flow of his valiant blood; and a crowned monarch seemed, in his eyes, barely worthy the alliance.

Let us now attend him in his precipitate return from the singular sally he had been provoked to make.

The extent of ground which divided him from the tower, was not likely to vanish with a wish; otherwise, the sight that momentarily opened upon him, might have tempted the aspiration of a thousand. At first, a few hobbylers (the lighter armed

skirmishing cavalry of the time) had only been positively distinguishable upon the neighbouring hill; but anon, a continuous train stretched down its whole face. A tide of more formidable men-at-arms, too, began to surge over its brow. Nor was this all: a farther hill, peeping, as it were, over the shoulder of the nearer, glanced and glistened in a manner that showed it to be similarly occupied. This last circumstance weighed heavy with Sir John; for, as he knew to a furlong the space that intervened, and naturally calculated the column to be unbroken, he obtained an appalling guess at the enemy's total force.

Thus far, prospects were disagreeable enough, but they became in a trice still more infelicitous.

Hitherto concealed by the body of the tower itself, a band of prickers that had pushed its approach round the foot of Corsin-law with undetected celerity, emerged into view. Their vicinity was astoundingly close, and with it sprung up a novel and vital hazard. For, so near had these scourers got to the barbican,

that it seemed possible they they might reach it as soon, even, as those who ought to be its defenders. A correspondent opinion appeared simultaneously to possess both parties thereon ; for, with shout and spur, a desperate race for priority immediately commenced.

It may well be supposed, the inmates of the tower did not look with apathy on this scene. On the contrary, they were worked up to an unendurable pitch of excitement. They crowded the battlements, and with cries and gesticulations, urged and encouraged their lord and his company In particular, a hoary esquire upon the portal rampart, writhed and twisted his frame, as if he hoped by the violence of his own contortions to expedite the passage of his friends. To add to the clamour, a trumpeter, stationed on the summit of the keep to perform the here customary tenure of cornage, sent forth unceasingly loud and piercing blasts.

Gentler hearts, too, fluttered to behold the struggle. At a terraced window stood two well-graced females, watching its progress with in-

tense anxiety. The younger, a surpassingly fair girl, (her wimple falling back uncared for) hung distractedly over the balcony. With straining eyes and hard clasped hands, she offered prayers to the Virgin, more earnest than availing. It was de Coupland's daughter.

Fortune, at length, declared against the absentees, and it became evident to Sir John, that the foe would attain his gates sooner than himself. At any rate, two or three of the more advanced prickers were almost sure to do so; and in that alone there was a risk too palpable to be overlooked. The old banneret saw and anticipated it, by a mandate that heightened his personal imperilment.

“Up, up with the drawbridge,” he vociferated, being sufficiently near to be heard from the walls. “Close all out that are out, but hold ready for a drop. Mouboucher, ply bows, man—ply bows. Heed not for me. Now, my hearts!” he continued, addressing those with him, “let us prove ourselves men of our hands,

and beat off the foremost of these marauders ; we may gain entry yet. Together, together, boys. Here's for it ! who—ho ! A Coupland ! ”

The draw-bridge barely rose in time to exclude the first of the fast-coming Scots : which they perceiving, hastily wheeled and received with couched lances the headlong charge led by Sir John. Unhelmed and unmailed as he was, the lion-like old man threw himself upon them. Doughtily, indeed, did he then lay about him with the porter's staff, his only weapon : and stoutly did his menyie stand to it around him. Those on the walls were not idle, but marked down several of their lord's assailants with missiles. That assistance, however, could not avail, for the Scots being every moment reinforced, Sir John and his little escort were finally overpowered.

The alert troop of foragers, at whose mercy de Coupland now lay, proved a clan of roving dalesmen from Teviot ; who had outrode the main body of their compatriots, and covered

their approach, by sweeping round the base of Corsin-law, instead of crossing it directly. Such instances of ultra zeal and despatch were very frequent. What the motive, may be discovered in the apothegm of ‘first come, first served.’ The leader, a petty chief of rough exterior and rapacious habits, was prompt to make, what he considered, the legitimate use of his success; the sack of Corsinside being an affair wherein he wished to see no sharers beyond his own people, and every moment lost was likely to bring such up. No sooner, therefore, did he behold the owner disarmed and in his power, than he rode to the edge of the fosse, and demanded quick and unconditional surrender.

“ Let go your bridge chains, on the instant,” he bellowed, “ and you above, have a care; if another shaft be shot, its feathers shall be wetted in the best blood of your old lord here. Swith; open gates, for by the black rood of Melrose! I’ll hear neither stay nor trifling! Do ye heed me?”

“Heed him not, men,” cried the captive banneret, straining his voice almost into a scream, “For your lives! yield not my hold without trying arms for it. To work, bowmen, twang string till arms ache, I command you.”

“Peace, I say, Sir Dotard,” growled the dalesman. “Think’st thou we are children, and talk in jest. What I have sworn, I’ll do; and ne’er speak twice on’t.”

“Beggarly reiver!” retorted Sir John, foaming with indignation, had I my good curtle-axe at side, I’d cleave, spite of knapsack, to thy scurril tongue! and ’twould not be the first time I have so silenced one of thy land-brood.”

“Ha! dost bay me?” said the man of Teviot, menacingly. “Be warned! Sport not with the young bull, lest thou brook his horns.”

He then again addressed those within the tower: uttering the most savage threats of immolation, in case they continued to withhold submission.

To resist was obviously useless, and the ill-

prepared garrison as obviously wavered thereon, The damsel de Coupland, who had been an agonized spectatress of the above angry interchange, called frantically to her father's people to yield at once, and not further compromise his safety. The appeal appeared decisive, for the seneschal (the same venerable esquire before mentioned) immediately spoke from the barbican, and offered to open the gates, on pledge for the honourable treatment of his master.

“ Bertram Mouboucher !” said Sir John, accosting the above party, “ this is not well.”

“ Dear lord ! we have no choice,” replied the other, deprecatingly.

“ None,” rejoined the dalesmen, “ but that of swinging from the battlements ; and methinks, by your delay, you have some mind to’t.”

“ Well ! what must be, must,” admitted de Coupland, “ but, at all events, I charge thee, ope not to this nameless boor, wait till some knightly hand present to take the keys.”

"That does there now, then," cried a cavalier, in complete mail, at that moment galloping up, attended. "Cranstoun,"—he continued, checking the Teviotdale leader, who, nettled by the 'nameless' taunt, was on the eve of taking unmanly vengeance,—"hold back! I will not see his white hairs violated."

With some mutterings, and exceeding bad grace, he of Teviot gave way.

"Sir Patrick Hepburn," said de Coupland, to whom the new comer was not unknown, "thou art a good knight and true. I yield myself thy prisoner."

"That may not be," interposed Cranstoun. "The knight of Coupland is the prize of my lance, and I claim the right of a free man-at-arms over him as such."

"If it be so, thy right cannot be gainsaid," returned Sir Patrick. "Sir John, thou hast had occasion to know the law of arms in that particular?"

"I do know it," said the banneret! the bit-

terness of his feelings somewhat moderated by the allusion to his dearest retrospections ; “ and if Sir Patrick thinks *that* law available to rascaille snatchers, I have no more to say,”

“ Nay, Cranstoun belongs to good blood, and his demand may not be challenged,” was the decisive answer.

The draw-bridge having been lowered, the free-booting prickers crowded into the tower, and, doubtless, the business of pillage went on thirstily. Cranstoun, unwilling to be idle at such a time, momentarily abandoned his prisoner to the honourable keeping of Sir Patrick Hepburn, and hurried to make a guest at this feast of broken garners. The thoughts of the unthanked and unconsenting purveyor himself, reverted to and centred in a more tender concern,

“ Sir knight of Hailes,” said he, to Hepburn, “ I have to beg your protection for two gentle tercels here within—the child of my age, and the bequest of a dear sister. Will it please thee to accompany me, whilst I seek them, with

the voice of comfort. Thy countrymen are wild, and may forget the bland respects due to their condition."

Scarcely had he spoken, until he felt the soft arms of his daughter entwined around his neck, and folded her tightly to his still brawny breast. She had flown to his side, regardless of the fierce and rapidly-increasing throng.

"Amise—my darling Amise," he exclaimed, "having thee with me, all the rest is nought. Tremble not, little peat, 'tis but a common trick of warfare has befallen me. I' Gad's truth! I deserve it, for suffering the surprize."

"Oh dearest father, these fell invaders! what will they do?"

"Break, plunder, and mayhap, burn: the rascals are vengeful, as well as greedy," said the sire, his wrath bursting. "Let them. Corsinside wins not a thought, while Coupland castle's to the fore. The scurvy 'trapment grieves me; not the paltry loss."

"But will they not hold my father bodily in

duress?" queried the afflicted girl. "Will they not drag thee into Scotland?"

"Pugh! if they do, 'twill be to haggle for a rounder bode of ransomry; and old John of Coupland is not beggared yet. Come, my child! this unseemly exposure becomes thee not. For thy sake only, will I re-enter my own hall, other than to command it. Where is Hester?"

"I know not, surely, having rushed hither in terror. Her firm heart holds better in an hour like this than mine."

"Ah! wench! she shews more of the de Coupland strein, than thee; and yet, I know not how, I like thee better as thou art. Let us in to her. Sir Patrick, thy leave."

The banneret, accordingly, conducted his daughter back to the equivocal shelter of a pile filled with enemies.

Not long after, the whole hostile array began to file across the front of the tower, at about a quarter of a mile's distance, extending in a line

of portentous prolongation. A halt was ultimately called ; but, from the degree of marshalled order still maintained, it did not appear intended for duration. To ease the march of the lagging infantry, and recal the disorderly prickers who swarmed about the seat of spoil, was probably its chief objects.

Presently, a select band of lances, leaving the main body upon the plain, advanced up the grassy swell of Corsin-side. It comprised the pride and flower of the Scottish lowlands, and therefore, the best chivalry of that nation. Knights and esquires, all were in complete, though not gaudy panoply, and pennons fluttered in abundance. With many a demivolte and caracole, they drew rein before the gates.

At the head of these, and exercising that command which his great influence and martial deserts secured to him, rode James, Earl of Douglas; son-in-law to the reigning monarch of Scotland, and himself reigning in its border provinces. This turbulent baron, whose me-

mory tradition and song have handed down to us, as the ‘doughté Dowglas’, had truly enacted deeds that warranted the appellation. Whether in the lordly halls of Dalkeith, or in the gloomy fastness of the Hermitage, he upheld a power that constituted him the first subject in his land—if, indeed, that term can be applied at all, to one of the feudal despots of the period.

The Earl was, just now, upon the threshold of middle life; that is, at the stage when manhood puts forth its ripest powers. Largely framed and long in reach, his formation, though not compact, evinced a wild strength, which must have rendered him terrible in assault. His upthrown beaver disclosed to view a set of features possessing in their combination a certain cast of nobleness, but each too strongly defined to challenge separate approval. Habits of stern dictation and uncontrolled impatience had left an impress on them. He did not inherit the complexion of the ‘pale dark man,’ whom Crauford speaks of as giving name to his house,

being slightly inclined to the sanguine; wherefore, perhaps, and owing to the colour of his short wiry beard, he acquired the appellation of the red Douglas, in contra-distinction to his saturnine brother of Galloway—Archibald the *Grim*.

He was encased in a suit of tough plate armour, and bestrode a destrier, more remarkable for bone than beauty.

Around the Douglas were collected a number of distinguished compatriots; some of whom merit especial nomination. First, the Dunbar, Earl of March and Dunbar; a noble curiously connected in after-years with England. Bold and enterprizing, and said to have always swayed fortune to the quarrel he espoused; probably the consequence of his seldom being faithful to a losing one. Next, the cautious, but zealous, John of Gordon, frequently called Earl of Huntley. David Lindesey, Lord of Glenesk. The Earl of Monteith, and the gallant Montgomeries, sire and son. Nor must we omit, though but a

simple knight, the famous John Swinton of Swinton ; the tale of whose prowess, in France, had travelled before him home to his native land. All these warriors, dismounting, entered the great hall of the tower, and were not slow to command the attendance of its captive lord.

The apartment in question, was neither very spacious of its kind, nor finished in its appointments, Corsinside being but a casual residence of the Couplands, and not the chief seat of their power. Two small lancet windows, pierced through a wall of immense thickness, and at some height from the ground, dimly lighted its confines. Saving the enormous dogs for sustaining the winter fuel, the massive oaken table and benches, and a few sporting implements hung around, there was little else of garniture beyond that displayed in the primitive masonry.

When Sir John entered—or, it may be said, was brought in—he found the new occupants of his hall reposing with all that careless familiarity of appropriation, so usual to men who can

control. One sat rocking to and fro upon a stool another lay supine upon a bench ; a third, scorned any other seat than the great table itself; and the rest, yawning, laughing, or lazily conversing, paced the flagged floor. Nearly all were known to the banneret, as he was to them. Frequent collisions,—occasionally but rarely friendly—rendered the border chivalry no strangers to each other.

“ I cannot say ye’re welcome, sirs,” observed Sir John, on whose mind the free demeanour, just alluded to, wrought bitter impressions.
“ And I perceive it is not necessary.”

“ Nay, faith !” muttered the blunt Swinton,
“ ‘tis less than needful ; an Englishman’s hall
is ever a true Scot’s hostel.”

“ Mass ! but he seldom leaves it without
paying shot,” retorted de Coupland, not dis-
posed to ‘ carry coals.’

“ This time, however, ‘twill ha’ to be put to
the score,” answered the other, indifferently.

“ And after, ta’en with usury, ha ? It shall;

no fear on't. Pray sirs," speaking to the company at large; and assuming an air of meek humility, "may I presume to sit. My limbs have lost some of their pith; more meseenis than I before did wot of."

"Sir knight of Coupland," returned Douglas, taking the hint, and offering some shew of attention, in which he was more or less imitated by the others; "you are pleased to use practice. Be seated at your pleasure, sir. We will not forget our knightly courtesy, be assured."

"Forget!" murmured Sir John,—"'tis new to me to learn that Scot e'er knew any."

The speech was inaudible, and therefore unnoticed.

Either the above piece of formality had been a sudden effusion of crossed humour, or the old knight immediately after took a second fancy; for he continued to stand, in spite of the weakness he had deplored.

"We intend, Sir John," resumed Douglas, "to take such chance cheer as thy buttery may

afford us. Will it please thee to take order for the same. Come, knight! thou *hast* been a rare lance, as I have heard, and should'st know the ways of out-riding wights, aye! and guess the measure of their stomachs too."

" My lord, you but insult me," answered de Coupland. "'Tis you who command here now. I am thrice a stranger."

" Be it so, then, if thou wilt. Archibald," speaking to a dark-visaged youth, whose features much resembled his own, " hie thee out, boy, and see what ready vivers can be gotten. If our hungry loons have left none, as 'tis like enough, a stoup of wine must serve our need. Quick! we have far to ride ere nightfall."

Archibald who, by the by, was the Earl's own natural son, instantly obeyed.

Douglas again turned to de Coupland, who still stood aloof, with a severe and distant mien.

" Thou wilt join us in our brief refection, Sir John?" he propounded.

" I will never sit on sufferance at the board

I've ruled; nor stand a cipher in mine own hall." replied the other, "my presence here is not required."

"Go then, Sir of Coupland," rejoined Douglas, coldly and haughtily. "Compound with thy emprizor, and depart whene'er thou wilt. Doubtless, he will take ransom or parole."

"He! a wretched pelferer: I will not disgrace my knightly word, by such a passage."

"Then let him look to't. I mell not with the matter."

At this juncture, the Earl of Moray entered, and was received with gratulations; followed by queries on the cause of his being belated. In apology, amidst one or two other circumstances not relevant to our story, he cursorily adverted to the case of Farneley.

"And how did'st dispose of the scout?" asked Douglas.

"Whoo! left him to the death, and the sooner, that his fate will kibe the Percy; of whose following he is, or rather was."

De Coupland, who remained yet in the hall, only because the diversion caused by Moray's appearance had checked him in a purposed speech, here found a meet occasion to bring it in.

"Ye halloo bravely on the wood's edge, Sirs," he observed derisively. "Wait till the boar is roused. Harkye, bold Douglas! Thou may'st take prey and prisoner in the march, but if thou hopest to bear away, be jogging swith. Trot, trot, my masters! or ye will abyne it. Kibe the Percy, quotha! ha! ha! as the urcheon did the ox, and got crushed by his hoof. But I am wrong. Stout Northumberland and his apt sons, will hardly thank me for thus giving thee the warning."

"'Tis pity, Sir Greybeard," rejoined the distempered Moray, betwixt whom and Sir John a regard of unfriendly recognition passed. "'Tis pity that when our good king David dashed his gauntlet in thy mouth, he did not disable thy tongue. 'Twould have been a kind office to thyself. You stare—and 'tis not strange: when

late we sat in frosty fellowship at Raby, thou did'st not expect this lesson."

"I remember me, I scorned thee, then, as I do now," replied the old knight. "And for the favour thy king David did me, methinks there lies no debt between us."

"Peradventure thou may'st find the contrary," said Moray. "Are ye not reminded, lords? 'Twill be good quittance to our country to make this hoary luckster do her homage by a captive visit: aye, and kiss the tomb of him whose person he defiled."

"By the soul of Bruce! the thought's a good one!" exclaimed John of Gordon; whilst others looked approvingly.

"He hath a daughter, too, of boasted beauty," resumed Moray, never very regardful of delicate observances, and now acting under a private impulse that made him less so,—"to shame it 'mongst our Scottish dames were to do bale upon a hundred English swains—belted gallants to boot."

"Who for her father's sake will hunt thee to a reckoning; base and discourteous Scot," said Sir John, deeply indignant. "Douglas and Sirs, I seek my privacy; but may not say good betide ye." The venerable banneret then haughtily withdrew.

"As Saint Bride shall guide me!" observed Douglas, replying to Moray's last remark. "I wish the English chivalry no other bale than I can work with the point of my good lance. Natheless touching what was before propounded, there is ground for liking. It must be considered. Who was the prizor of the knight?"

Cranstoun, being named, and chancing to be at hand, presented himself before the powerful thane, with his reckless features trained into a shew of submission not usual to them.

The lucubrations of late writers, have rendered the customs of the feudal ages tolerably familiar; but in order to be certainly intelligible, it will not be amiss here to premise, that in the warfare of these times all prisoners were left at the

personal disposal of their individual captors. Ransom was seldom or never refused ; and it was very usual for the latter to enfranchise the former upon pledge of honour, that such would be, in due space, strictly rendered. No despicable part of a successful warrior's acquisitions was derived from this source ; nor did the love of glory by any means cause indifference to it. The custom had the effect of greatly economizing the expenditure of costly blood ; and thence the significant richness of a knight's armour often saved him when its iron strength had failed. To make amends, penniless churls were slaughtered without mercy. A modified control was, to be sure, exercised over these transactions, by the superior lords ; but on the details of that it is not essential to dilate.

“ Here, friend,” pursued Douglas, summoning the other to his side. “ Thou art he who first captured the old knight, lord of this Corsinside ?”

“ I am, my lord, and claim my prize of him.”

“ It is not contested ; but we have a will concerning him. I ween now, thou wilt not be sorry to prick back to Teviotdale after so fair a windfall ?”

“ I know not why I should say nay, my lord.”

“ Nor I either, so far. But thy beasts are well laden, and thy mates have not mispent time, I warrant.”

“ They seldom do, when they can employ it.”

“ As to day. Soh !—then, haply, thy spur, for this raid is well nigh cooled—Hey ! is it not ?”

The man hesitated, and mumbled something about a willingness to ride with the Douglas to all ends; but it was obvious the Earl’s estimate of a free-living dalesman’s martial *animus* was shrewdly correct.

“ Peace—peace ; spare thy conscience,” said he, interrupting the other. “ I permit thy return ; as much that I forsee no further ‘vantage in thy company, as that it may serve a purpose. I need not tell thee to watch thy prisoner; that

thou wilt for thine own interest. But this, mark : hie thee with him homeward, and take nor pledge nor ransom for a month. Ere its close thou shalt have counsel. Go ; I have no more with thee. So, my lords," he continued, addressing his friends. " We can act in this matter as our after-judgment may dictate. And —ah ! here's wine. Let us quaff a single cup to fortune's favour, and be off."

Several stoups of wine were at the moment placed upon the board, and speedily assailed by the thirsty campaigners.

CHAPTER VII.

With hot war's stratagems do oft times mix
Love's hidden wiles and amorous tricks,
Trying fierce natures.

As the man of Teviot retired from his colloquy with Douglas, he was stopped and drawn aside by Moray.

“The heritor of Gilmanscleugh, or else I do mistake?” prefaced the noble.

“The same—with service to the lord of Moray,” was the rejoinder.

“Good. List to me friend. Thou hast, doubtless, rummaged through every corner of this old rookery, and can't confirm me, if there

be not lodged therein, two demoiselles, kins-women to the Coupland?"

" Of a surety there is."

" Nay, but confound me not with waiting wenches. They I mean, are perfect dames.— A pair of them?"

" Aye, content thee--there are twain. I've had scope to note them."

" Enough. These will, most like, 'tend the old knight upon the northward prance thou art about to lead him. See you bar them not ; but the rather, should they be minded otherwise, make it compulsory. Understand me : our expedition over, I would find them at thy peel of Gilmanscleugh."

" I stand avized, my lord."

" Perform—and thou shalt find account in it. For the present, adieu. Yet—stay. Can'st point me out these ladies' bower."

" Um ! let me see ! yes,—yes, I can."

" Have with me, then ; chiefly, that I would have thee find some chaffering occupation for

old Coupland, whilst I hold speech with one of them, but for a cock's crowing. I follow thee."

Cranstoun accordingly led the way, and Moray pressed anon upon his heels.

Meanwhile, the other nobles, heated by their post march, and flushed with the excitement of self-promised triumphs, enjoyed the brief carouse, thus commanded under a hostile roof, with bursts of boisterous merriment. A trifling interruption occurred, not of sufficient moment to disturb them in their hasty snatch of revel, but nevertheless, bespeaking notice at our hands. It concerned a party whom the reader may not have forgotten.

Father Noel, abandoned to his own direction by Sir John's people, had not yet been lucky enough to escape detention. His good steed first recommended him to the civilities of certain sharp-eyed prickers, who having despoiled him of that, turned him adrift, only to encounter one who honoured him with a more personal, and, as it proved, more dangerous regard. He

was finally conducted to the tower; and his entrance into the hall, in warm parley with his new *friend*, invited the question of the cavaliers there assembled.

"Hilloa! father," cried Douglas, "who hast got with thee there? We marvelled at thy absence, and have been fain to take our fare without a god's grace. Hither—bestow it o'er a cup for thine own crushing."

The personage thus accosted exhibited no trace of the holy character implied. He was a short but thickset man, of middle age, and dense saturnine aspect; fortified from head to foot in brown, but not rusty, plate, which bore the marks of service. In his right hand he carelessly swung the formidable description of battle-axe known by the name of a jeddart-staff. Altogether, none would have guessed that they beheld in him my Lord Douglas' domestic confessor. It might be surmised, that in a household so warlike, not even the most sacred functions were exempt from the call of arms; but sooth to say, Richard Lundie had little disposition to claim

any exception. He loved the clink of mail full as well as chant of litany. *Cedant arma togae* was not exemplified in him; unless, after another construction, it might be held verified in his admitted prowess.

After he had devoutly complied with his patron's last suggestion, he reverted to Spalding.

"I have caught here, my lord," said he, "a pestilent villain, who had like to have filled St. Andrews' itself with damnable heresies. Now, would not I vow a pilgrimage to St. Ninians, at Whitethorn, to have him bodily under bolt, in Scotland."

"Would'st thou, i' faith, father?" exclaimed Douglas, laughing; "then 'twere sure a pity and a sin to baulk the Saint of thy offertory."

"And specially, considering that 'twill be his reverence's first journey in such mood," observed the Lindesay. "Wilt thou not, then, father, take occasion to procure a mass for the souls of those thou dost intend to slay in this our expedition?"

" You misjudge the church's servant, young Lord of Glenesk," returned the bellicose chaplain, demurely, " I am not here with will to slay ;—no, *beati pacifici*—I come rather to restrain the ungoverned fury of such hot youth as thine. If I appear in guise of graith, 'tis but that I may render less fearful interference ; and I carry weapon but to use when unhallowed menacement obstructs my duty and assails my person."

" Thou art strangely ill used, then, father," rejoined Lindesay, " being right often so obstructed, as I may well suppose."

" Certes, my path is rugged and my dangers manifold, yet am I in no way daunted," replied Lundie, with ludicrous composure. My honoured lord (to Douglas), will it please thee, give me some command over this contagious firebrand ;" meaning Noel.

" Tut ! our time is spent—do with him as you list. What art thou ?" turning on the friar, " can'st ought allege 'gainst being sent

to face our Scottish gownsmen? Deliver quick, man."

Spalding's contumacious indomitable spirit was not to be cowed even in such presence.

"I am no less than *man*," said he, "and thou art no more. As to your dealing with me as you threaten, I can offer but one objection, and that is, that you will do it without right or reason, drawn either from my conduct or your authority."

"Hear how the knave rails it on dignities!" exclaimed Lundie, "'tis a key to his unlicensed principles."

"I am no subject of the Scottish crown," pursued the friar, "I bear no arms—my opinions, whatever they may be, cannot be amenable to your jurisdictions."

"The offended Church knows nought of national limits," returned the chaplain; "'tis catholic. Let us once have thy *corpus* in possession, and we'll make law of that."

"Come, my lord," interposed Dunbar, who

had hitherto paced the hall wrapt in his own thoughts, “these quiddets are not for us. Let the bald-coot pack with Gilmanscleugh ;—and we to our horses. Straight-away’s is the escry.”

“All alike !” murmured the disregarded friar, “*fel in corde, fraus in factis !*”

“Silence ? *pauperculus, discalciatus ac contemptibilis !*” thundered the chaplain.

“Be it as Dunbar hath said,” decided Douglas, rising from his seat. “Father, use thy pleasure in direction. Mounté, knights, mounté.”

The mandate was gladly listened to, and, in a few minutes, the tower was deserted by all but Cranstoun and his immediate troop ; to whose wardship Lundie took previous care to commit his brother clerk.

The last individual who passed the gates somewhat a lingerer behind the rest, was the Lord of Moray.

The army being once more set in motion, shaped its course southward, through Tynedale, and soon stole beyond the visual range from Corsinside.

That place, however, was not destined to entire evacuation, for this day at least. Owing, partly to the prospective inconvenience of being benighted on the mosses, and partly to the attractions of the potent cheer still unconsumed therein, the dalesmen had resolved to defer their departure until the next sunrise. The males of the late establishment were all either dispersed, or disarmed, and locked up. In the latter predicament, their venerable master, his esquire, Mouboucher, and the luckless Spalding, also partook ; with the additional discomfort of knowing that the restraint imposed on them had an ulterior object. Nor were the two youthful dames of the family left to move without vigilant observation. Whom it is time to pourtray at large.

Amisia de Coupland, the younger of the pair, as the banneret's heiress, takes precedence. She was one of those 'witching beings whose charms peculiarly baffle description. Angel, Houri, and Grace, were terms in use before the deluge,

and probably at these times, *tabooed* even in Owhyhee, but had they been available, would fail to raise the true idea. She was too much a *woman* to be an angel—too retiring for a houri—and too unstudied in attitudes for a grace. Yet her form and face, actions and speech, were, together, overcharged with a spell, which her clear blue eye served to launch forth and fix. She was of middle stature; luxuriously modelled, and her attire rather marred than improved

“ ————— a waist,
Indeed, sized to love’s wish.”

Her hair was a glossy auburn—not of the sorrel cast, usually so denominated by partial mothers, but the rich sunny brown veritably implied.

Thus beautiful, and with such expectancies, Amisia, young as she was, might have made more than one high alliance; but the golden-headed dart had never been fairly planted in her bosom, and she entertained certain romantic

notions which a wound of that kind could alone realize. These, she was self-willed enough to stand upon, and, therefore, was likely to continue some time longer the “queen of love and beauty,” at the northern tournaments. Warm in fancy, sanguine in disposition, and unfettered by worldly opinions, her heart once engaged, she was not constituted to bend its aspirations to conventional shadows. She was, however, essentially of the gentlest dispositions : a sweet smile ever played around her mouth—a mouth that a miser’s heir would have sacrificed his patrimony to kiss, and wished the caress to endure, like that invoked by the Athenian, for thrice ten years !

Two pretty women in consecutive pages is somewhat too much ; and ladies may incline to think, that the traits of the second, like the madness of Tilburina’s confidante, should be kept modestly in the background. But to act on this would be to cast a derogation far from admissible. Brevity affords a medium.

Hester Arnecliffe was the daughter of Sir John de Coupland's only sister, and an orphan. Her father had been an esquire of approved descent, but no estate; consequently his child was left entirely dependent on her uncle, who had fostered her with kindly affection. She was now in the full bloom of womanhood, majestic in person;—

“ ————— such a brave stature
Homer bestowed on Pallas, every limb
Proportioned to't.”

Her hair and eyes were both black; the latter long and narrow, with that slumbery character admired by others than the Orientals: features fine and full—*teinture*, pale, but exquisitely pure and polished.

It would almost have seemed that this lady's mind took a tone from her corporeal endowments; for it soared in ambitious and exaggerated flights. The noblesse of chivalry had, in her, a worshipper more ardent than rational. Of her lineage she was inordinately proud; and

it was her deepest source of regret that, with it, more substantial dignities had not been inherited. A frigid, and occasionally even apathetic manner, belied strong passions lurking within. Heated in brain, her perceptions were often illiberal ; and, careless of regard, her expressions frequently tinctured with sarcasm, but nevertheless, her spirit was in the main lofty and generous.

These maidens, differing so much in disposition, may hardly be supposed to have been congenial companions. Long association had, however, done much, and the entire absence of petty doubts and jealousies, more. The ties of blood, too, not being severed by diverse interests, bound them closely together. Thus, if no great mutual sympathy sustained betwixt them, there was a perfect mutual reliance to compensate.

But a short time before the present, Amisia and Hester had been on a visit at the castle of a puissant baron, in the neighbouring county,

an ancient friend of the bannerets; to one of whose sons it was popularly understood the former was affianced. From hence, on the after-coming of the old knight himself, they were suddenly withdrawn; not owing to any breach of good feeling with their host, but from a disgust which Sir John took to certain other casual guests. Ere returning to his castle of Coupland, (seated further towards Tweed,) he had found it expedient to sojourn a brief while at Corsinside, and, so doing, fell in the way of the mischance it has been our province to record.

CHAPTER VIII.

—comme un jeune cœur est bientot enflammée,
Il me vit, il m'aima ; je le vis, je l'aimai.

FRENCH POET.

THE Scots in the tower being of opinion that, as their chief expressed, “ it was better to hear the lark sing, than the mouse cheep,” were early stirrers. As an unsupported detachment, they durst not hazard a moment’s unnecessary stay, with the country adjacent thoroughly alarmed.

When the troop assembled to commence the retrograde, it offered a curious spectacle. Besides spare horses, taken from the old knight’s stables, and loaded with the spoil, the hobbies

of the prickers themselves were heaped before and behind the saddle, with a heterogeneous mass of commodities. Scarcely any species of interior plenishing, that was portable, but might be seen in the way of removal. Even the nags appointed to convey the captives, were not exempted from other burthens, being more or less bedecked with what may aptly be called *housings*, of bower and table napery. It seemed the spoilers were unwilling to allow any means of transport to go unemployed, and felt no delicacy about making the late owner himself an accessory. How such a circumstance galled his ebullient spirit, may readily be imagined. Spite, however, of his anathemas, himself, esquire, and dear wards, were compelled to mount in this fashion. No attendants were permitted them. Spalding was also brought forth, and added to their party.

But these were not the only living prey, the thrifty Scots designed to make companions homeward. As they moved through the circum-

jacent pasturage, they collected the grazing cattle into a herd, and drove it before them. Cranstoun, indeed, facetiously remarked, that if the tower itself ‘had owned four legs, it should not have been left behind.’

Slow, and excessively irksome to the involuntary travellers, proved the rate of progress; and long was it, therefore, before the battlements of Corsinside were lost to sight. This became doubly painful, when a backward glance certified that the common usage of foray, had not been forgotten. Clouds of smoke accumulating, above the abandoned edifice proclaimed the unfriendly fire that raged within. All the knight’s family appeared mournfully conscious of the fact, except himself; or, at least, did not, like him, disguise their cognizance.

“Why look you back, and shudder, Amise,” said he, abruptly, “Think’st thou I guess not the cause? God wot! I do, full well. Were it night, I ween we should see a bonfire. Ah! well! Scotland has smoked before, and England

shouldn't grudge a puff of neighbourhood. Turn for turn, and I'll wager which has the worst on't. We'll have pill for poll, and more."

"A miserable race of mischief," struck in Spalding, "cursed in deed, and cursed in consequence."

The observation drew upon the speaker the sharpened edge of a reminiscence, in no way salutary.

"*Thou mumble!*" exclaimed Sir John, "thou forsworn post! thou bewraying vagrant! But for thy base time-tampering, John of Coupland would not have seen this hour."

"Blame me not, Sir Knight; but rather thine own ungovernable passions. 'Twas on compulsion, I fled from thy gates; for of a surety, my skin is no thicker than another's, and thy staff something of the heaviest. Moreover, tho' apprized the Scot had ta'en the field 'twas but in generals. I could not foresee this fall on Corsinside."

"Mass! I believe thou liest. 'Tis like enough thou wert of counsel with the enemy."

"Then, methinks, I am rewarded; being here in custody."

"Nay, Sir John," interposed Mouboucher, "in that matter, at least, you wrong this stranger. I heard his parley with the Douglas, in our hall, and mind, it was no honied one. O' my word! 'a's a rampold knave, and a stiff-necked."

"Aye, sayst thou!" exclaimed the knight, looking less wrathfully on Spalding, "did 'a beard the Douglas in his speech? I owe him no ill-will for that. How sprung the fraction?"

"Why, it seems, he, here with us, hath been a disturber of holy things in Scotland; and _____"

"I am no disturber of holy things, anywhere," interrupted the friar; "but—*minorum minimus*—an ordained upholder thereof."

“ ‘Slife ! art thou, in sooth, a gospeller?’”
demanded de Coupland’

“ Soothly, I am; and will avouch myself an honest,” replied Noel. “ I truckle not to worldly institutions ; I wink not at the pride and luxury of the hierarchy ; but I am a sincere construer of the sacred evangelists.”

“ Thou goest in quaint guise, then, and ridest on unclerkly missions,” observed his interrogant, doubtingly.

“ Yet give him credit, dear father,” entreated a sweet voice, “ I overnight held pass of seemly converse with the holy man, and methought his words maintained his calling ; albeit that his outward portraunce less accords. We’re fellows now in evil fortune, and should be toward with each other.”

The hard features of the friar softened into something like admiration, as he bestowed an approving glance upon the fair pleader ; and Sir John, for his part, suffered himself to be mollified.

"Nay," said he, "an our gossip here be a reverend clerk, the case is hugely altered. The cloth must have respect. I'm no pagan, as our Lady of Jesumont can testify. 'Save thee, father! we'll pass this gear."

In making his appeal to the virgin, the rough old banneret mechanically crossed himself; yielding, like many others, a habitual deference to notions, which, however proper, they neither examine nor understand. Thus we have known a man of practically dissolute life melt into a perfect fume, if he caught one of his family inadvertently humming an air on a Sunday. The sound seemed to jar painfully upon his ear; and yet the only reason to be surmised, was a strong verbal remembrance of early lessons.

The party contrived to plod on for several hours without occurrence. The tract of savage and thinly-peopled country they traversed, sufficiently accounted for this; and as nearly the whole course of their journey extended through the same, little idea of any in prospect could

be entertained. At high noon, a halt was called, for refreshment and repose. The site chosen, for what modern martialists would term the bivouac, was by the side of a shallow mountain stream. Here was water for the cattle, and the rising bank afforded convenient resting-places. Provision and wine, prudently brought from Corsinside, fully engaged the attention of the marauders, and moderately that of our friends, Sir John and Mouboucher, who, their joints being stiffened by age, soon stretched themselves in grateful recumbency; but Spalding, more indulgent of such company, prolonged his meal in concert with the rest.

Amisia and Hester, freely left to themselves, as incapable of making any use of the liberty, strolled to some distance. Winding amongst the fern and lichens with which it was encumbered, they ascended the further bank, until they attained the top. To proceed on, was to leave the encampment entirely out of sight in

the hollow, which, when they perceived no regard was had to their movements, they did not scruple to do. Whatever topics might, on ordinary occasions, engross, and whatever thoughts colour the confidential converse of these maidens, at this time, they slept unheeded: Nor masque, nor marriage, nor love, nor minstrel, nor happiness, nor head-tire, now filled their hearts, and charged their tongues. The novelty, as well as peril of their situation, coupled with possible contingencies, commanded them exclusively. They figured to each other, immurement in some rude and solitary Scottish peel, rough gaolers and wretched fare; together with superadded attacks and importunities, such as the female imagination is ever active in conceiving. Then the precarious condition of their venerable parent, exposed to the wild accidents of an unruly time, with no great guarantee for personal safety, raised truly serious apprehensions. In all these fears, however,

either Hester Arnecliffe partook less keenly than her cousin ; or her unbending temper disdained an equally vivid exhibition.

The imminent concerns whereon they communed were so engrossing, that notwithstanding the unconfined nature of their view, it was long ere they became aware of the increasing vicinity of a third person. When they did discover this, they were able at once to distinguish the attributes of an active youth, imperfectly armed, and mounted on a rough-bred hobby. He was in the act of trotting briskly towards them, and apparently had approached from the opposite frontier. Conjecture followed scrutiny.

“ The man comes on apace. Englishman or Scot, I wonder ! ” observed Hester, after both had taken silent note.

“ If he be the first, ‘twere a fair deed to advertise him that he runs on danger,” said Amisia. “ If the latter, Hester, we had best return—Alas ! to what protection ! *He* is the lesser bugbear.”

“ By my troth ! I dare say we are one to him ; or well may be, stationed thus, in such a place. I marvel much that 'stead of drawing nearer, he doth not take fright, and gallop back, holding us for something else than good.”

Hester had a certain staid pungency of manner, which she did not depart from, even in her lighter sallies : at this, as much as at the idea raised, Amisia laughed.

“ Nay,” returned she, “ Fairies are tiny creatures. Thy brave form will spare us that repute ; and, I should hope, the traveller hath a better grace of discernment, than to suppose us witches.”

“ He beminds me much of a poor varlet, who I dare swear, doth think *thee* one, at least.— Nay, blush not, wench, I do not mean the gallant swain of Raby ; but him we had such ground to mark, during the Whitsun-festival at Durham.”

“ Ah ! Hester, thy thoughts return more oft to Raby, than do mine,” rejoined Amisia, with

a secret significance not unfelt by her companion.
“ But touching the similitude you spoke of, my
memory is somewhat treacherous as to thy se-
cond object.”

Now in the above assertion Amisia did not use her wonted frankness—wherefore is unknown—but she assuredly *had* a shrewd guess, at the absent party to whom Hester alluded.

“ Pshaw ! Amise,” replied the latter, “ I am no blind Bayard and thou no cozener. I mean the gallant whose gaze pursued thee, at each day’s pageant, as tho’ the sight had been his food of life. Why, thou wer’t passing anxious, then, to learn his name and bearing.”

“ Which I ne’er could do,” said Amisia, admitting the recollection, and, unwittingly perhaps, honouring the comer with a narrower inspection. “ Tush ! ’twas his pertinency made me curious. We women, coz, are daughters of Eve. Though, marry ! I believe ’twas thy wicked eyes that drew his after us, were it soothly known.”

Hester was not unconscious of possessing some attraction in that way, but she, nevertheless, instantly threw back the accusation as utterly void of point.

The remarkable frequency with which people who have been the subject of our thoughts, or conversation, opportunely burst upon us, is so notorious, as to have given birth to a proverb. Some fervid thinkers have hazarded the conjecture of an impalpable intelligence, a sort of indefinable bodily sympathy, to account for it; and, true or false, theories as wild have won credence. In the present instance, at all events, a closer approximation convinced the maidens of what they could not originally have formed any serious notion; namely, that the stranger at hand was certainly the individual whose image had been suggested. His garb and general equipment, would indeed have given the lie to the supposition, but his surprised inquiring gaze, coupled with a suffused complexion, and evidently conscious manner, came in confirmation.

Men ever have been, and ever will be—until the millenium—slaves to prejudice and association. Dress,—outward bravery, in this *virtus post nummos* world, is clearly the “one thing necessary” for holding place in society. To take our own times, the only exceptions lie in a “plum,” or a patent of peerage. These may enable the fortunate owners to dispense with it, *in circles where they are known*; but let simple talent or moral worth beware of presuming, unless enfranchised by cost of broad-cloth. But with regard to the party before us, he looked, spite of his equivocal appointments, engaging enough to interest feelings which in this era, seldom stirred at any thing below knighthood.

Hester, with the bold indifference natural to her, exposed a stedfast front to the young man’s coming; thereby, compelling Amisia, whose more feminine timidity might have caused a shrinking. The effect was, that he had unobstructed opportunity to ascertain their quality, ere he stopped for salutation.

"In the name of all marvels!" he then exclaimed, his prepossessing lineaments drawn into a perfect *study* of doubt and pleasureable wonder, subdued by respect, "can it be the Demoiselles of Coupland, I behold, alone on this wild ground? Impossible!"

"'Tis both possible and true, sir stranger," answered Hester, taking the lead, though the querist's solicitude seemed solely directed to Amisia: who, to be communicative, blushed somehow excessively.

"Pardon my boldness," resumed the youth, doffing a plain cap, for he wore no head-piece, and thence, exhibiting a head clustered with crisp-brown locks; "I conceived—I thought—I—"

"Well, no matter for thy thought, man," interrupted Hester, rudely enough, "it touches not ours."

"Perchance," said Amisia, willingly anxious to atone for the abruptness of her friend, "our jest was earnest, when we said the cavalier would

deem us elfish sprites, mocking our own resemblance. Was't not so, sir?"

"Indeed, gentle lady, I know nothing but that I am favoured in the vision; and, if it be a cheat of glamour, do owe the actors thanks and not chiding."

"Heyday! a master of modes, scouring the mosses!" exclaimed Hester, sarcastically. "In faith, Amise! we're only secondary castaways here, after all. Pray, sir, does England, or Scotland, wail thy wandering?"

"I am in my own land, lady," returned the youth, coldly, "and thank Heaven for't. I have some cause too—but that is foreign."

"Yet, art thou not safe in it, fair sir," said Amisia, moved by the natural kindness of her heart, if from nought else, to take concern for her goodly moulded fellow-countryman: "there is perilous company in thy path."

"A world of thanks for thy kind thought, lady! I am prepared. I know the Scot has made an inroad."

“Ah! but I speak on matter of the moment. Thou wouldest not cope single-handed with a whole troop of forayers?—surely not.”

“Nay, Amise, do not prejudge the cavalier,” said Hester. “My warrant on’t, he would not care!—Would’st, sir?”

“Twere a silly boast to say so,” was the cool answer.

“Ah! come! that’s wisdom fraught and frank!” she rejoined. “About, then, sir countryman, for a few yards onward throws thee into the jeopardy.”

“Do, sir. Turn and away!” added Amisia, “e’en while we speak the evil’s growing.”

“What must I think!” he exclaimed, confounded rather than alarmed. “Sure nought can threaten *me*, that may not glance on *you*. For mine honour’s sake! unfold me more; that my actions may be guided according to its requirement.”

Amisia then hastily ran over the leading details of their condition; and again counselled

the listener to fly ; assuring him, that he only incurred the risk of partaking their misfortune, without the least chance of averting it. Still, he did not obey ; but pressed several questions as to the strength, composition, and probable future route of the band ; between which he appeared to revolve in his mind divers unknown considerations. Amisia was his chief informant rendered so more by his pointed, though bland and diffident appeals, than by her own forwardness in the office. Indeed, the maiden was, altogether, deprived of the vivacious impulses that usually actuated her. Their extraordinary situation accounted for much, but not for all. Something in the unknown's look, deferential and subdued as it was, embarrassed her. She experienced an unprecedented difficulty in assuming that affable superiority of manner, which she was taught to believe became a noble maid in an interview with one of questionable, if not humbler, rank. Nay, to assume the privilege of laying bare her inmost play of soul, it may be

affirmed, that she felt levelled to an equality, she had no disposition to resist. That he was the same individual whose eyes had paid her such marked worship elsewhere, she had no doubt;—that she had girlishly acknowledged the same by limited return, she also remembered. He, obviously, was not oblivious. It is probable, therefore, that the subtle electricity of mutual consciousness was at work with both.

“ I may safely presume,” he observed, after having obtained the knowledge he sought for, “ that the gentle demoiselles would gladly be spared this journey northward.”

Hester turned aside.

“ Oh ! why trifle with your safety, to put a quest so needless !” said Amisia, no wise partaking in her cousin’s strange coolness.

“ With thee, lady, I trifle not, be assured. What if I be able to prevent it ?”

“ Young sir, this passes,” said Hester, impatiently : “ thy lack of self-heed has ere this convinced us of thy lack of wit; but, please

thee, be aware, thy failing respect will not meet equal toleration."

"Thou art too hasty, lady" replied he, "if I am heedless of my person, the fault merits not the reproof of those whom I would thereby serve."

"Thou would'st!" iterated Hester, "why then for the will we thank thee, and so—adieu!"

"Nay, this is hasty," interposed Amisia, resisting the movement which her friend suggested, "Fair sir, thy will to serve us, we question not; regretting only that it should be unbacked by any reasonable view of means. Once more, be wise, and put thy hobby to the proof."

"I will, Lady Amise, and stoutly; but not with selfish purpose. Perchance my means of bringing succour are not so airy as may now appear. Certain, I fear, they are not; nathless, they shall be sought at some cost."

"And if found," cried Amise, "for somehow,

I do believe thee serious, gratitude, and guerdon, both await thee."

"The first, expressed by thee, will pay me tenfold," was the rejoinder.

"Remember though, kind stranger," added Amisia, losing her diffidence in a glow of heart, "remember, 'tis my dear father must be cared for; to his fate, mine is in every way subservient. Thou hast seemed to know Sir John de Coupland; and may'st, therefore, know him, for one that will not forget a benefit."

"He shall have rescue, if deed of heart and limb can work it—a worthless life the pawn. The saints save thee, sweet lady, till I redeem my word."

Waving then a respectful adieu, the stranger wheeled round his active little nag, and was anon seen, retracing with rapid stretches the ground he had shortly before passed over.

The two maidens gazed after him for a while in silence; each had her particular train of

fancies. Amisia's ran chiefly on his character and identity; Hester's, on his promised undertaking. Both were, in different degrees, impressed by the earnestness and apparent sincerity of his manner; but the latter, notwithstanding, yielded to doubt. Had any English village, or post of strength, from which aid might be collected, lain near their probable course, she would have been less sceptical; but, as it was, she knew the contrary. Then the cavalier had bent his way directly towards the Scottish confine, and it was inconceivable, what hopes he, a simple and solitary *Englishman*, could have in that quarter.

“ ‘Twere well, Hester dear,” said Amisia, breaking the pause, “ that we should hie us back with all speed. Yon ruffians may take mind to recall our steps, and to detect this new-found friend ere his retreat be sure.”

Hester complied, but a slight shrug and elevation of eyebrow intimated her indifference to the motive.

“I see thou hast no reliance on this chance,” observed Amisia, as they proceeded, “but wherefore deny it play. Really, coz, thou art passing wayward ; and I must needs say, didst treat your poor countryman with something less than courtesy.”

“Tush ! I care not to lend my ear to every gamesome varlet’s practice. Trust me, Amise, thou hast too much credulity, where a smooth chin and fair brow only vouch for sincerity.”

“I may confess I do not suspect deceit, where I cannot surmise inducement,” returned Amisia, nevertheless wincing a little.

“Ah, wench ! dost not wot there are those with whom the present stands for all in all ; who live on the opinion of the moment, and think it cheaply bought by proffers. They salute us with a lie, and leave us with a promise, given the more freely, because untaxed by calculations of performance. This fellow meant but to grace his parting with a flourish.”

Amisia looked her disagreement on the point.

“ Well,” said she, “ I perceive thou art determined I shall not feed upon fallacious expectation. By my fay! I could almost suspect thou wert curious to behold the Scottish hills, thy concern hath altogether been so light upon this progress to them.”

Hester coloured deeply, and what was unwonted in her, seemed embarrassed. Her features, however, quickly resumed their general dignified repose.

“ My cousin ought to know that I am not apt to yield to over-wrought fears; still less to be prodigal in terms of avowal. But my sense of misfortune is not the less poignant, because that I refuse to exaggerate its pressure.”

“ Oh, truly, Hester,” replied Amisia, “ in that I do thee ample justice. With thy firm courage I am enough familiar, but not, as displayed in passive patience. Complaint I ne’er expected from thy lips; but did not look to find

thy swelling soul and English indignation so close mouthed. Why, wench, I thought to hear thee talk nothing short of donning casque and buckler thyself to give these Scots their due."

"Oh ! that I had been born to use them," exclaimed Hester, with sudden enthusiasm, "then, indeed, would I shew my indignation on those who have outraged our land, and wronged my second father. Not, Amise, as thou wouldest have me now, by powerless railing."

The conversation need not be pursued. In a short time they again mingled with the troop of borderers ; whom they found preparing to resume their march. Saddle-girths were tightened, bridles replaced, and the straggling cattle re-collected. Soon all were in renewed motion, and the yet unspent-day promised to see them fairly into Scotland.

CHAPTER IX.

The lovely brook athwartz the path
Too briefly neared :
That gliding water shews no wrath ;
Why is it feared ?

THE awful situation in which we left Raymond Farneley has not, it is hoped, escaped all memory. To the vicinity of the little chapel at Bleaklaw, we must again resort.

Shut up in the interior, the priest and esquire remained together some time in solemn communing. But to recite the strain thereof, to particularize the murmurs of the belated prickers, or to repeat the reproaches, which Lennard Tyzack relieved his mind by heaping

on his thoughtless wife, would fruitlessly extend our pages. Pass we these to observe, that, in the mean time, all other vestige of the armed throngs, wherewith the village had so recently been encircled, faded into distance. The circumstance was impatiently noted by Ormiston, and his tolerance, at the same time, gave way.

“What ho! sir priest,” he cried, indecently thundering at the portal, “the half-hour’s sped. Bring forth the Englishman straight, else we must seek him roughly.”

“He comes,” answered Raimond himself; stepping erect from within. “He is ready. Thou mayst now perform thy headsman’s task; and I will only ask thee to be brief in it.”

“Therein, at least, then, I will pleasure thee,” was the unfeeling retort. “A hobby here!—Soh!—Now, raise the prisoner.”

“Untie my hands, and let me mount myself,” said Farneley calmly. “I have not been used to need assistance, and do not now.”

The request was rudely disregarded, and two

prickers approached to execute the mandate. Whereupon, the nerve-strung youth, thrusting them aside, strode alone up to the animal held to receive him, and, by a singular effort, clambered into the saddle.

“ You behold,” he exclaimed, looking gallantly round, for the strong spirit of national pride was upon him, “ how one who has wielded an English lance goes to the death. Did I but couch it now, I’d carry company withal.”

Ormiston and his men hastened to mount; one springing up behind the prisoner.

“ Tyzack !” continued the unhappy esquire impressively, “ forget not my past charge. And, oh ! if thou canst gain audience of our noble Warden, tell him, that Raimond Farneley perished boldly on his duty as a marchman.”

No more was permitted, for the Scots immediately surrounded their victim, and led him off, at a rapid trot, towards the sullen brook designed to be his watery shroud.

Albeit that the jerkin-maker and the few

rustics left with him, did not gaze on this proceeding with the frozen horror which it would have excited in most of our living countrymen, yet were they not unmoved. The elders exchanged the trite remark, that the “goodly lad was surely somebody’s bairn,” and found in the simple remembrance a melting appeal. They followed with straining eyes and involuntary shudderings, the progress of the ill-functioned party, until the shift of ground concealed them, and then, ’midst lifting of hands and shaking of heads, separated to their respective cabins.

No such compunctionous visitings, however, disturbed the fell resolution of Moray’s vassals. With them no casual sympathies operated to humanize the savage materials of which the “strong men of old” seem, almost universally, to have been composed. Speaking of this, one would think some change, independant of progressive refinement, or the spread of religion even, must have come over the larger part of mankind. For certainly, the scenes of death

and aggravated torture upon which our fore-fathers could look with indifference, if not pleasure, were such as we thrill at, in bare imagination. The polished Romans gloated on the butchery of gladiators, and abandoned men to wild beasts :—the chief heroes of the middle age, hanged, quartered, racked and incarcerated, as if conscience were a thing unknown to them. Attribute these enormities to brutality and ignorance, the apology fails with reference to the contemporaries of Virgil and Horace :—charge to the errors of heathenism, they were Christians in the days of dungeon, rack, wheel and faggot.

When the jackmen arrived at the side of the burn, which it will be recollectcd was the same near whereto Raimond had in the morning encountered Spalding, they lost no time in entering upon their shocking office. One was dispatched up, another down its flow, to search for what they termed a “dub,” that is to say, a stilly pool of some depth. The former speedily returned.

"This way, sir henchman;" he notified, "I've found a swirl would suck down a hay-goff, were it such an unchancy handful we had to deal wi'."

"Swith, then, carles!" cried Ormiston, "let us get this cursed darg done; it's not a cast o' work to dally o'er."

"We'll not be hindmost in the raid, after all;" observed the former speaker, "I spied more of our spears making down the linn."

"I could well spare their company a while," observed the leader, "tho' it matters nougnt. Aye, sure enough! here they come. Gilmanscleugh, and his menyie I'll hold a groat! He's ever either beforehand, or behind."

"Ah!" interjected another, "It would ill suit the Cranstoun to march under overance with the main heading."

"Ye're right enough in that, Archie," remarked a third. "Yet would I say yon is not his band. He knows well when to prick for the foremost clutch, and when to wait till the

splore's o'er. Now to my reckoning, this is a time for the early game."

"Cease your babble there," interrupted Ormiston. "Here is the spot."

The jackmen obeyed, and all drew up close to the edge of a deep eddy, caused by a sort of elbow in the stream.

"Southron," said the cold, unflinching leader, "behold the bath that sorts thee for knighthood—in the other world. Prepare."

Raimond made no reply, and the brute proceeded to issue detailed orders, which to repeat, would be disgusting.

Men have been heard of who have neither blenched nor quailed in moments of this trying nature: nay, who have even jested and made merry. Farneley showed neither the callous insensibility of the first class, nor condescended to *act* like the second. He sat pale and motionless upon the animal that bore him; not ostentatiously reckless, but exhibiting no confessed signs of fear or shrinking.

At this sad juncture, the late-coming spears had arrived within a moderate distance, and could be observed suddenly to open out their front and considerably quicken pace. Ormiston, perceiving this, thought proper to face towards them, and vociferate an hail of friendly inquiry. A shout in answer came back, but one of very unexpected character.

“Fye, Tynedale to it!” was the slogan, vigorously rung out, and echoed by a score of hoarse throats.

In the same instant the whole troop, couching their lances, burst like a tornado upon the startled Scots. So prompt was the attack, that resistance became utterly paralyzed. Lucky did it prove for Ormiston and a few others, that they sought safety by dashing across the stream, and taking to unqualified flight; for so wightly did the proclaimed Northumbrians bear their points, that of those who remained not one was left in the saddle.

The immediate act of Farneley, on hearing a

war-cry so vivifying, was to throw himself to the ground, and thereby avoid the risks of the collision. Almost before he could scramble to his feet, the affair was decided. Then, his name, pronounced in anxious and familiar tones, struck upon his ear. He replied to the call, and forthwith a hard, but kindly hand, grasped him by the shoulder. It was that of the Tynedale leader; and he,—Hugh of Hawden.

“ Ha! young kinsman,” the latter exclaimed, “ well met, and luckily. By my santly! we’ve got hither in a needful hour.”

“ You have, indeed, good uncle,” replied the other, emphatically. “ Believe me from these cords, that I may wring the hand, which, under God, has saved my unworthy life.”

“ Did it e’en go so hard with thee, boy?” demanded Hugh, a little affected.—“ But, I forget thy bonds; this will loosen them.”

With these words, he drew out his dudgeon knife, and soon set the joyful esquire at liberty.

"Jesu-Maria, be praised!" said the released : " I may yet die like a true brother of arms, in fair fight ! Uncle, to thee I owe the hope."

" 'Slife ! if thou owest me not better hopes, I've done thee small service." Where dying's on the dice, field or flood, cord or lance, are one and the same to a wise man. No, no, boy, if thou will look forward, let it be to care-free days and jovial nights. These are your stuff to live and long for."

The parties then next entered on a train of mutual inquiries.

If ever sincere gratitude was manifested on one hand, and honest satisfaction on another, it was in the present instance. These relatives did not often meet: a difference of life, a disparity of character, and a slender medium of intercourse, prevented. Yet were the ties of consanguinity in no way weakened. Nay, perhaps, as friends are commonly reputed to agree best at a distance, an unfrequency of meeting contributed to maintain kindness without inter-

ruption. They sprang from a stock, poor as to lineage, and humble as to station; but like most of that class, and particularly in their paternal dales, they were strongly sensible of the substantial claims of blood.

Happy is he, who, in this selfish, hollow, masque of life, can attach to himself hearts in his own family. Should he succeed, upon them he *may* venture to rely. There is a spell in the name of relative, which, to a certain degree, disarms selfishness, by engendering a sympathy of interest: it makes the owner, as it were, a part of oneself, and causes the good or ill fortune of either to be interchangeably reflected. This tends to create that mutual dependence, forming the great rock whereon only a solid friendship can be based.

It is true, that men seldom *seek* confidential associates amongst their kindred, and, mayhap, seldom find them to their wish; but that does not affect. Where minds are uncongenial—where there is no reciprocal attraction, there

can be no friendship of enjoyment : the thing is not imagined: Nevertheless, even betwixt kinsmen of such diverse dispositions, there may subsist an assurance, a warni feeling, better calculated to endure the wear and tear of society, than a finer sentiment less securely buttressed. Of this, nature must have been the bond which drew together the gallant esquire, and his blunt, unaspiring uncle ; for otherwise, their respective views and habits were utterly inharmonious.

It is time to explain how the Tynedale leader chanced to appear so exceeding opportunely. When he learnt from the friar Spalding that the Scots were gathering in such force upon the frontier, he stood at no loss to guess what was to follow. Now, at that precise moment, in consequence of having lately exhausted his household provision of beef, he was proceeding to a rendezvous, appointed for commencing a *speculation* in Scottish horned cattle. Hence the intelligence became more valuable. For being fancifully addicted to privacy in these transac-

tions, it immediately struck him, that the absence of the many idle and troublesome people employed in this great expedition, would leave him at a most prizable liberty to consult that humour. Speedy alike in his decisions and in his actions, he hastened to the place of tryst, and there, finding a sufficient number of subordinates, he led them forthwith towards Jedworth. It might have sounded a thought more creditable to Hugh, could we have predicated that concern for the situation of the Northumbrian esquire, whom he shrewdly surmised to be his nephew, had the rather stimulated him: but as candid narrators, we are compelled to record the above.

It is, however, but just to subjoin, that he had very incomplete grounds for imagining the necessity—and none for anticipating opportunity, of rendering the direct relief to give which he was providentially conducted.

Winding by paths only known to similar rovers, and carefully scanning the country from

the laws or hills lying on his route, he contrived to mark and avoid the march of the invading army. That passed, and the coast, as he deemed it, clear, he was on the eve of dashing into the deserted district, when Ormiston's band engaged observation. It was no part of Hugh's policy to seek a fruitless skirmish; but perceiving that he possessed a numerical superiority, and moved by the promptings of his wild spirit, he would not deign to turn aside. Indifferently nearing the enemy, his hawk eye detected the presence of a bound and guarded prisoner. Then, and not till then, the idea of Farneley recurred to him, as if by intuition. A closer scrutiny convinced him that he *was* the individual he beheld, and upon the belief he acted. The issue is known.

The Tynedalemen speedily disarmed and secured such of the Scots as were not already innocuous from wounds, making prey of their horses and arms. They conceived themselves also to have a “vested interest” in any movea-

bles that the vanquished might have borne about them ; but this “ right” they did not exercise ; well knowing that their trouble would have gleaned no reward upon the persons of Scottish jackmen *outward bound*.

“ Thou wert a bold swankey, Raimond, but a silly,” observed Hugh, “ to run a hazard that near had ended in such dole : methinks thou art bit by the fiery sprite that rules thy wode-spurred master. Hast thought, lad, whether this game be as well worth thy playing, as it is his ?”

“ Truly, I looked not so far,” replied Raimond, “ but why should it not ?”

“ Why, in that thou art but a nameless emprizer ;—he, a noble knight.”

“ But by repetition of such acts I gain a name.”

“ Aye, such a one as is bestowed on a staunch hound, or a sure hawk. The deeds of simple men are but so rated by those they serve.”

There was a stinging truth in this remark that penetrated deeply into the sensorium of the

younger Farneley. His inward mood was at all times but too assailable on the identical point. Visible symptoms of the pent-up chagrin appeared in his altered mien.

“ Nay, I would not have thee lose heart on’t either,”—resumed Hugh, repentlying noting the effect his sally had produced;—“doubting, sinks the swimmer. At worst, I wot, thou sharest lot with most in the world, and may not ‘plain for lack of fellows. Then, thou art in the way, boy: the lord Percy doats on a gallant chevisaunce, by whomsoe’er performed. Who knows what’s in store? Why should not the heel of a Farneley become a gilt spur as well as another’s? It is a good wight-riding name, an’ I trow! our fore-elders were as near Adam as the king’s.”

The esquire shook his head in unchanged spirit.

“ Thou art kind, uncle,” said he, “ in trying back for a new scent, but that thou didst open on is the true. Yes, yes, we dare in deed, and

swell in thought, but to attain a fuller sense of our exclusion. Does a rare chance crown our efforts with, what will be called, success ; honour is doled to us with a grudge, and serves, at best, only to upraise a thankless posterity."

" If you believe all this, why not live as I do, free of men, instead of suffering in ungrateful association ? Why keep up a struggle that taxes without vantageing ?"

" My wishes, and thence my habits, tug towards the companionship of chivalry. It is my breath—my life. *In* the race, I may suffer checks and heart-burnings ; but as an onlooker, I could not exist."

" Content ye, then ;" rejoined the plain dalesman, " the bowmen who fixes his own butt may not murmur if his shafts fail to carry. But who have we here ?" breaking off, to scan the person of a pedestrian that happened to draw near, " sure I should know that jerking hop-halt ! It is Lin Tyzack, that was chased out o' Caple-

stone for speaking ill o' the Reeve. Ho ! thou slasher of hides ! which side o' the border do'st now affect ? ”

Tyzack, for he it was, acknowledged the challenge. Incited by the interest he could not help feeling for the fate of Farneley, he had issued beyond the village to watch its consummation ; and witnessing instead the fortunate change of affairs, made a shift to gain the scene of action.

“ A thrifty ride to thee, Hughie of Hawden,” said he, “ thou do'st not forget old gossips, I see ; no more do I, when I can think well o' them. As to which side o' the border I'm upon ; —ye may ask it o' the Lord's Keepers, for it's more than I can tell. Sir squire,” addressing Raimond, with some earnestness, “ I never was held a trickster in speech, and trust ye'll not deem me one now, when I declare that thy escape has eased this breast of a right sad aching.”

"By my santly!" exclaimed Hugh, "but living near the Scot has brought an' unlikely thing to pass."

"As how, prithee?" demanded Tyzack, who saw from the other's manner, that the exclamation bore reference to himself.

"Why it has smoothed thy tongue, and made thee show feeling for another man's pain," was the reply.

Tyzack balanced his unsteady frame, and bent a hard and serious look upon the speaker. It seemed as if the emotions the past event had excited, whilst they subdued his asperity, had left him more gravely sensitive.

"Hark ye, friend of Hawden," said he, "when thou hast endured the spurnings of the great, the brute-play of the strong, and the gibes of the roisterer; when weakness, which should be a buckler, has instead, drawn on abuse and insult from cheap-daring cowards; when infirmity, which should bespeak compassion, brings on thy head mockery and ridicule; then, and

not before, may'st thou guage my mind. Ye, who can by strong hand right your own wrong, and on the spot repay the injury, think it mighty generous that ye bear no after malice. Why should ye? your blood is tempered—your ac-compt is struck, and there's no more on't. Not so with me. I have been scoffed at by all—trodden on by all—and compelled to bear all; but not enabled to forget all. As memory prompts me I am wont to speak, and I cannot help it's being ill."

"Odsbody! gaffer Tyzack!" exclaimed Hugh, somewhat astounded by the effusion he had heard, "why thou hast surely stumbled on the tongue of a preaching clerk, in thy roamings, and given us the last words that lay on the tip o't. At any rate, then, it seems thou hast no grudge lying at my brother's son's door."

"None;" answered Linny, "I owe him rather grace for kindness. And let me tell thee what may please thee more, Hughie. England and Scotland have been to me but as two ban-dogs

worrying each other, and snapping at me beside ; yet, has the bearing of thy young kinsman this morn, made me proud that my first skirl was winded south of Cheviot."

" Oh ! my life on him !" exulted Hugh. " The Farneley's are all true steel, back and edge. But 'sbody ! how I'm wasting the day, and have the holms of Beamerside to clear before the night ; aye, and see the moon on Gaudilands. Troop, my jolly reivers, troop !—And now, nephew, what can I do for thee ?"

" Leave me horse and arms. I must straight hie homeward," answered Raimond. " There will be doings to-ward, which I should be loath to lose a share in."

" There are a half-dozen at choice," returned the other, pointing to those lately captured. " Tho' bethink thee, ar't in a state to cross the fells, or would it, e'en now, be wise to try ?"

" Certes no," interposed Linny, " this day has done its dole, and fully. Be avised, sir squire. Rest under my rooftree till the next

dawning, and then start with a fresh pith and a clear country.”

“ Linny is right, nephew,” urged Hugh. “ ‘Twere a mad thought to boun with fainting spirit, a half-tired hobby and a sinking sun. Sojourn the night at Bleaklaw, and to-morrow we may prick in company.”

The esquire, experiencing that relaxation of fibre which usually follows extreme tension, acknowledged the wisdom of this counsel, and consented to its adoption.

The Tynedale chief then proceeded to issue his final ordinances. “ You, Scots,” he began, addressing the crest-fallen remnant of Ormiston’s men, “ shall be laid fast in Bleaklaw until I pass this way back. Not that I build on aught of ransom; for I know the devil one o’ ye has a cross to bless his pouch with, or a neighbour that wouldn’t sooner give it to ha’ ye kept in bondage. No, as I’m too soft-hearted to ha’ ye thrown neck and heels into this dub, which would be the handiest surehold, I must

clog your legs in another sort; for I will not leave them loose to raise the country on me. So, forward, ye louns!—and you two, wily Will and big Mat o' Hesleyside, take charge o'er them, and spear the first that cheeps of running."

Hugh having completed his directions, the whole set onward.

"I might ha' made shorter work with these jackmen," remarked he, as if in justification of what he feared might be held an imprudent act of forbearance, "but we moonlight riders care not to raise more feuds than we can help. Had it not been for thy strait, Raimond, I had no great mind to fall on yonder."

"Go to! my bold uncle," replied the esquire, "the sight of a Scotch baron's armed vassals, about to plant hoof on English ground, would, I am sure, at any time, have heated thy spur."

"Why aye! that, indeed, shapes a difference! Had they been free honest shifters, like ourselves, it had been nice dealing."

The distinction here raised did not at all accord with the young esquire's notions of propriety or patriotism; but he let it pass; knowing the inutility of combating the rooted opinions of habit.

Raimond, and not Hugh, Farneley was the exception to the common character of their race. The latter, an almost landless dalesman of Tyne, pursued, with scarcely a sense of disrepute, the customs of his fathers. What these were, the annals of the border abundantly record, and the reader can by this time identify. Of a clear head and quick capacity, he might have been a superior creature; but unschooled in honour, and associating only with the wildest of men, he became—or rather he continued ever—such as we have seen him.

After reaching the village, Raimond again resorted to the cabin of the jerkin-maker, and Hugh, ridding his band of incumbrances, cantered briskly forward on his foray.

CHAPTER X.

I saw and loved her so nearly together that I do not know if
I saw her before I loved her, or loved her before I saw here.

CALDERON.

Fore heaven I am ashamed
Thou hast a kinsmen's interest in me!

* * *

I could eat my spur-leathers for anger!

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

NOTHING can excuse unlimited digressions in a story but the dulness of the main theme ; a sort of apology scarce likely to be often offered. Let not the too experienced reader rise up in alarm, under the shrewd impression that the disclaimer prognosticates a disposition to commit the sin : we are about to be elucidatory, not erratic.

At the era in which Raimond Farneley flourished, it was a circumstance essential to

estimation in the pursuit he loved, that the aspirant should be of noble, or at least, gentle origin. *He* was of neither, as the thing was then understood. In our—it is hoped—more sensible times, there need be no hesitation in avowing that he was but the son of a plain low born ‘churl.’ True, that his father (like himself, an anomaly in their house), had raised himself to a place of worship amongst the burgesses of the ancient town of the Newcastle; still, the defect of blood (!) fettering the youth’s generous ambition, remained uncured. The boasted wisdom of the elder ages—*younger* they should be called—could find no attribute by which to distinguish a man, but the almost solitary one beyond his control, the accident of birth. To be sure, those already favoured in that respect, were the dispensers of honour, and naturally inclined to enhance the dignity of their own body.

It is not discursively that this barbarism is brought under reprehension. Upon the mind

of Farneley, as upon his prospects, it weighed heavily—much more heavily than, even then, it ought. His spirit, no less than his intellect, repelled its operation ; for in the first he was energetic, in the last revolving ; but who or what can overleap positions of universal acquiescence. Moreover, the career he had embraced threw him in the way of having his conventional disadvantage continually brought home to him and magnified to its maximum. We all know what delight little people, who chance to possess some petty privilege, take in dragging it before others who do not ; of these he had met many. By them his memory was incessantly refreshed upon the special fact which an irresistible epidemic made him most wish to forget.

Fortune, however, though she thus frowned on him at the outset, had been gradually won to smiles. Several feats of romantic valour performed in sallies out of Berwick whilst the intrepid Harry Percy, already surnamed Hotspur, was governor, had obtained him the favour of

that enthusiast in arms. *Æqualis æqualem delectat.* A similarity of age recommended him further, and introduced him to relations which gave his finer qualities scope to discover themselves. Capacity of head, as well as command of hand, was not to be met in every ordinary man-at-arms, and his, Sir Henry so highly appreciated, that in spite of common prejudices, he appointed him, ultimately, one of his body esquires. Since, he had accompanied his lord on an adventurous expedition to Calais, and in the plains of Picardy sterlingly approved himself.— Now, to attend him in Northumberland.

On the return of day, the esquire bade an early adieu to Bleaklaw. It is unnecessary to travel with him across the dreary range of moorland fells, whereover he was bound to journey ; but the rather, to drop at once upon the interruption which awaited him. It came in a shape as extraordinary as unexpected. This will be explained when we predicate that it was he who encountered the ladies of the house of Coupland

in manner before detailed. There were causes, to be touched on anon, that rendered his sensations during the interview somewhat unfriendly to cool decisions; nevertheless, he was not long in bringing one to maturity. It was to waylay his wild uncle's band on its return, and, with that assistance, rescue the captives. Upon Hugh he believed he might securely rely for co-operation; to communicate with him was the object of his rapid retrograde.

In enjoying by anticipation the delight of succouring these ladies, he experienced more than a chivalric gratification. Amongst the crowd of gallants who hovered around Amisia de Coupland, more or less distantly, Farneley had been, save during a late celebrity, unobserved by herself. Not so she of him. At joust, at pageant, and at every other show wherein the fair of these days exposed their charms to the gaze of the multitude, hers was the form his eyes eagerly sought out, and having found, fixed on in silent banquet. No bumpkin who sees a

county beauty on the race stand, and licks his lips in gaping admiration from below, could be more intense, more removed, or more bashful in his raptures. Yet was the sentiment he felt indefinite. Love, it has been said, cannot exist without some encouragement, however faint and wire-drawn. Of such, he had not the shadow. Their orbits were so distinct as to preclude even a passing courtesy, much less admit familiar converse. Then her station—her prospective wealth, gave her claims far indeed beyond his condition. He had, therefore, been accustomed to regard her as an object desirable in the most extravagant sense of the word, to those who *might* aspire to her; but of the number, he could not conceive himself to be one. Galling and bitter was the belief, but the morbid consciousness of depression, which was his weakness, made it all-powerful. Neither was he ignorant that an illustrious young nobleman of the province was a reported suitor. Indeed, as he seldom saw the lady without his being at her

side, he had early assumed the fact. To have the power to sue Amisia seemed to him enough to prove it; for who but must burn to use so blissful an immunity.

Notwithstanding all this, Farneley could “eat, drink, sing, and be merry,” as though the hoary de Coupland had never in his old age had a daughter. A beautiful vision did indeed flit before him, but the icy medium through which he viewed it cooled what might have been a lively passion into a mere day-dream. To feel all the thrillings and writhings of love, the “stricken deer” must have substantial stimulants as well as painful doubts. An amorous flame requires fuel to kindle on ; without, it will only be like the luminous exhalations that flicker o’er a marsh, pale, sickly, and impalpable.

It remained for the late meeting to inflame with vital fire the quiet combustibles collected and seasoned in his bosom. He had spoken with his goddess, and found her—woman. He

had noted in her cheek the dancing play of blood—read the involuntary proclamation of her eyes—and caught the traitorous sinkings of her voice. Not that these deluded—not that they raised the shadow of a hope as to futurity; but the sweet poison was thence poured sensibly into his veins. Henceforth, his passion became restlessly active, and the separation betwixt Amisia and himself, erst viewed with calmness, yawned and blackened into a gulf of painful despair.

Luckily for his design of the moment, he stumbled on the Tynedale troop even earlier than he expected. A riotous and much varied drove of cattle formed its advanced guard, announcing that the incursion had not been unsuccessful. Then followed the free-rangers themselves, most leading spare horses, and all well laden with booty. Great glee and good-humour was obvious in bursts of laughter, and frequent essays in practical joke.

When Raimond perceived the encumbered condition of the men, and the jaded appearance

of their steeds, he began to entertain some misgivings as to the success of his plan; but in no way deterred, he pushed through the straggling horde, and sought the chieftain. Him he found riding in rather novel company; for at his side jogged Linny Tyzack, with his better half strapped behind on the same animal. The worthy jerkin-maker, it transpired, had taken a resolution to shift his quarters, a step not unusual with him, and availed himself of the present eligible means. After what had occurred at Bleaklaw, he did not deem it prudent to prolong his stay there.

A volley of greetings and marvellings followed the junction of the parties; the first, Raimond duly returned; and the latter cut short by relating his recent adventure.

Hugh listened to the recital with an air of considerable interest, mingled with signs of perplexity.

“Umph!” he ejaculated, in a long considerative drawl, “I grieve for the old knight’s

case. He's a bluff heart, and's been no ill friend to the border. Who, say ye, drives the prey?"

"A Teviot-man—one Cranstoun; thou may'st know him."

"What, Gilmanscleugh?—Know him!—ay, that I do. I would it had been any body else!"

"Why, you do not fear him, my stout kinsman?" propounded Raimond, a little dissatisfied with his uncle's coolness.

"*Fear him!* I fear no man, sir squire. But, soothfastly, there's been bread and salt 'twixt me and Clem, which is bad to get o'er. I fear I may scarce mell with him."

"Heaven and earth! what do I hear? Good uncle, bethink thee! wilt see gentle demoiselles, as well as a renowned old Northumbrian, dragged across the border without striking to prevent? Oh! 'twere shame upon thy Tynedale strein."

"Natheless, nephew, I will not strike."

"Then I give thee up as a recreant march-

man, and no Farneley!” broke out Raimond, unable to contain his disappointment and indignation.

“ So, there !” cried the dale-chief, elevating his eyebrows, and giving a provoking chuckle; “ wait, friend, and take me with thee. I will not strike, I say again—unless other means drop short: but that seen, there may be a ditty to sing. Old de Coupland shall not pass me a prisoner, an’ it lie in fair wightlihood to withstand.”

That the sanguine hope he had entertained, of winning a claim on Amisia’s grateful remembrance, should be dissipated; and worse, that he should appear to her in the light of a boasting pickthank, were thoughts intolerable to the ardent esquire: it may be believed, therefore, that Hugh’s concluding declaration was as acceptable as timely.

“ Spoken like my father’s brother !” he exclaimed. “ Prithee, uncle, pass o’er my hastiness, and let us take order for this action.

Trust me, it may not be thought to spare blows."

" Softly! I know it may," rejoined the other; we honest marchers, that ride for our own hands, have customs little wist of by ye that boun with the Lord Warden."

" Ignoble ones I fear. Oh! bold Hugh! you have largely bought my gratitude already; beggar my heart outright, by trying this lay with lance in manful fashion."

" Bait me no more, boy!" said Hugh, roughly; giving tokens of irritation. "I'll have my humour. Think'st thou, because of his following a noble, and, peradventure, wearing a brighter knapschap, that I will bide bidding from a springald. No, no; the free spear of Hawden guides his own way on the mosses."

Raimond, thus rudely checked by one, whom, however, he might regard, he had not learnt highly to respect, drew aside in moody silence. Hitherto accustomed to be honoured with a sort of deference by his kinsman, not unnatural,

considering the superiority of his flight in the world, he felt this rebuff the more keenly. But any merely personal pique that he acknowledged, sunk to nothing in comparison with the chagrin of being denied an opportunity of signaling his courage in the eyes and service of the beauteous Amisia ;—of exhibiting that prowess wherein he had some reason to rest confidence. To this, the bare act of rescue seemed in his view only subservient. Strange, that at any time men should have fancied ability to destroy and injure, the arch excellence ; and still stranger, that such an attribute should have found distinguished favour with the tender sex.

But the above was not the only vexation Raimond anticipated in connexion with Hugh's probable mode of prosecuting the affair. His knowledge of border policy enabled him partially to catch the dalesman's intentions ; and guessing these, caused him to wince under the apprehension of being confounded in association with him and them. Willingly would he have

sought other instruments wherewith to have accomplished his wishes and redeemed his promise, but he knew it vain. Nay, so poignant, on longer reflection, grew the shame of confessing such an ally—and that ally his father's brother, that he was wellnigh inclined to throw the exploit altogether into his hands, and avoid being further seen in it. In counteraction, came the respect due to his personal pledge, and an uncontrollable yearning to be, on any terms, again near a blaze of attractions which could only scorch himself.

For several miles the pulk (a cossack term, here very applicable) continued its course ; the leader holding no communication with his nephew, though it was pretty evident from the indulgent expression on his hard, but not ill-meaning features, and the sidelong glances he occasionally bestowed on him, that no very serious affront had been taken on his part. Devoid of offspring himself, Raimond had always been, during their rare meetings, a sort

of pet with him: perhaps the difference of their characters only made him more so. Those emanations of nicer feeling which sometimes clashed with his own mode of life, he generally received much in the manner that a stout mastiff does the petulant play of his master's urchin heir.

At length, a scout that had been purposely despatched in advance, returned with information that the Scottish foray was for certainty coming in sight. Hugh, immediately on the news, assumed the practised warrior. He caused the cattle and *impediments* to be left in the rear, and drew up his spears in the most imposing way he could. He, himself, rode forward in front, accompanied by Raimond, to whom the symptoms of hostile preparation gave reviving satisfaction.

The space between the two bands soon diminished to such a degree, as to render it time for one or other to demonstrate attack, or for both to halt and await events. The cautious

alternative was chosen. Then, each body, standing at gaze, divulged fairly its respective strength, and that appeared to hang at a balance. It was a curious spectacle. On either side were seen the subjects of a different crown, loaded with the fruits of an ancient and peculiar ‘act of reciprocity.’ Their numbers equal—their booty equal—and all equally disposed, rather to hold what they *had* got, than to fall by the ears about the how and the where of its getting.

Behind the enemies’ spears, Raimond could plainly perceive the group of prisoners, watching anxiously for the onset they doubted not was impending. The figure of the old knight was especially conspicuous, from the violent gesticulations, with which, to his own peril, he laboured to cheer on those he believed his friends. Amisia could also be discerned, striving to calm and restrain her sire’s excess of frenzy.

“Why this pause?—why this hesitation?” cried the esquire, addressing his relative, in a

fever of impatience. “ There are the caitiffs : what remains but to surge down and sweep them like a bursting moss. Thou wert not yesterday so tardy. By the rood ! De Coupland thinks us cravens !”

The Tynedale leader paid no regard to this exhortation ; but after giving his men a strict charge to continue steady, and obey no commands but his own, he rode slowly and singly towards the Scots. Slinging his lance, and letting it trail upon the ground, he from time to time raised both hands above his head, as if to shew that he did not handle weapon, and vociferated the words : — “ A Farneley ! a Farneley !”

No sooner was the overture palpable to the opposed array, than its leader, putting forward in similar style, answered by the cry of “ A Cranstoun !” In the end, they met and greeted peaceably.

The observant esquire heeded this ceremony with recurring displeasure. He suspected it to

be the precursor of some such unwarrior-like bye-play as he had previously chafed to surmise. The careful shew of battle, which had momentarily diverted this from his thought, he now saw was simply a precaution of wariness. The length of the conference certified him. It appeared to be conducted on both sides without intemperance. Once, indeed, the gestures of the English orator became exceeding vehement, but his warmth anon subsided, like that of a man mollified by concession. At length, the pair separated, and each returning to his command, issued a string of directions which will be best explained by results.

The scene of this occurrence was an open firm-bottomed moor, whereover there was no road, save that which it answered the convenience of the traveller to make. In consequence, it was perfectly possible for the most crowded trains to traverse it without meeting or jostling. Why the circumstance obtains notice, will instantly be perceived. The two companies

once more set themselves in motion ; but, instead of progressing directly onward to a collision, each diverged to its right hand, and circled clear of the other ; continuing the compass until a complete change of position was effected. During the operation, it became obvious that the English captives had been abandoned to their own guidance : they were to be seen crossing the middle ground, with view to join their countrymen.

“ Now, sir squire,” said Hugh, exultingly to his nephew, as the proceeding developed itself, “ What think ye o’t ? Have I not kept my word ? Is not this well, I say ? ”

“ How well ? to shew a truckling colleagance with the Scot—our country’s fell foe and raver,” was the discontented reply.

“ Colleagance, quotha ! to force the best part of a prey out o’the taker’s teeth ! Commend me to none such, unless I always have this day’s share o’t. Dost think such favours are won by friendship and fair speech ? No,

boy, something else must go to the bargain."

" Our lances would have won the same, more worthily," rejoined Raimond, his private aspirations whetting his chivalric sensibilities, " So far the ending's good, but we have lost."

" Bah ! you kill my patience. Nought can be lost where all is gained. But here comes, Sir John, *he* should be satisfied at least. Shout mates ! and give the worthy knight an English welcome."

His men took accordingly the hint, and hailed the old banneret's contiguity with noisy gratulations. Neither to Hugh nor they, was the future countenance of such a personage a thing to be neglected, now that chance had thrown them a claim to it.

" Halloo, again ! ye knaves !" exclaimed the said party, riding joyously up, " Cogs bones ! ye make noise enough in wind, I'd rather hear ye ring clang upon the jacks o' yon rascalrie,

and splitting noddles instead of ears. Who's foreman here?"

"A poor wight of Tynedale, an' it like your worship," answered Hugh, putting himself forward, and deferentially saluting the querist, "and one glad to offer his duty to the lord o' Coupland."

"Ah! why I should know that tanned-hide visage! Thou'rt of Hawden, art not?"

"Ay, your worship; I've some land there. It once fed two pewits."

"How comes it, man, thou, that art known both on Tyne and Rede for a bold pricker and a good spear, shouldst let these bannock-fed shifters off without cracked crowns—hey?"

"Methinks I did pretty well when I made them give up their grip of your knightship."

"Not amiss, man; not amiss. I'll not forget it either. But thou hast still left them something to shew for't. I'd fain ha' seen them stripped and stark; and thou thyself would not

ha' been the worse o' the trouble, I can tell thee."

" Why, soothly, sir knight, I am an ill-plenished yeoman, and have a pack of short fasting louns to keep in humour, who aye think an egg to-day better than a hen to-morrow. Now we've, as thou may'st see, had thrifty reason in our raid, and made a gathering that the chances of a tuzzle here, might as like ha' worsened as bettered ; so I thought it wisest to let a fair yielding content all."

" Aha ! " cried Sir John, in too pleased a mood to be unappeasable, " I fancy you dalesmen care not who is herried in your own march so long as ye can ride and reive in the other. Confess, man—for my eyes, tho' old are not useless—yon Scot, yon Cranstoun is not the salmon you care to liester."

" There has been, now and then, a truce, thou knowest, Sir John," said Hugh, apologetically, " and, mayhap we've then been gossips ; but what o' that ? By God's sancy ! had he offered

to ha' held thee or thine against the grain, I'd ha' found a joint in his splents. Leave Hugh Farneley alone, when the manhood of his country's touched."

" Certes, varlet, thou hast laid me under debt of a good word, which I will pay when it is asked ; and something weightier before 'tis asked : but of that hereafter. Yet, harkee, my cock of Hawden ! let me sound it in thine ear, —that he who keeps standing league with the Scot in time of war, is guilty of march-treason, and may hang. I say it but in counsel."

To this Hugh, laughing, made a palliative reply, and then put his company *en route*; still, however, continuing by the knight's side. They afterwards paced on together in easy chat, Raimond joining the ladies in the rear. Whilst the youth rendered some befitting courtesies to the latter, his appearance attracted the casual attention of Sir John, who inquiring of Hugh, was informed of the service he had performed in his behalf.

"Something of the kind my daughter whispered me," he remarked. "Soh! that is he. A likely stripling, and of seeming nurture too. How is he called?"

"Farneley," answered Hugh, "Raimond, it pleased his father to add to it, tho' I wot he's the first of his blood that ever had such an outlandish surname. Plain Hugh might ha' served the turn."

"He is of thy kin then?"

"My own brother's son."

"And a free scourer like thyself, I warrant?"

"No, your worship, no. My brother is a man of some having, and his ways are not mine. He has bred his boy to gentle offices."

Further inquiry led to Raimond's being brought forward in his true character; and procured him the personal acknowledgments of De Coupland. The gratification these gave him barely compensated for the pain he was weak enough to feel at having his connexion with a man like Hugh Farneley, at the same

ime, proclaimed. We call this a weakness, because it was not the *pursuits* of his uncle of which he was *so much* ashamed, as of the establishment, through him, of his own plebeian extraction.

“Bethink, sir squire,” said the knight, “of some way in which I can benefit thee. It is not meet that the Coupland should be thought ungrateful.”

At this appeal Raimond summoned up all the nobility of mien, of which he had much, and respectfully declined the proffer.

“One who has the honour to bear the lance of Sir Harry Percy,” said he, “would, indeed, be unworthy the distinction, did he accept private guerdon for a public devoir. Sir John de Coupland has claims upon his countrymen, which make ought done for his behoof of such a nature.”

The cavalcade shortly fell into quiet travel. Sir John, Mouboucher, and the dalesman riding in one alignment; the friar and Tyzack, con-

genial souls, in another ; the ladies and Raimond in a third.

That the gracious amenity with which Amisia listened to the gradually warming conversation of the interesting young squire, was chiefly directed to him as the zealous agent of their enfranchisement, may not be doubted. Young ladies are indeed peculiarly sensible to gratitude when the exciter is—as the old comedies have it—a ‘pretty fellow,’ and certainly she was not, on this occasion, steeled to form an exception. Even Hester, influenced by the newly-ascertained pretensions of the youth so far as they went, softened in her demeanour.

Farneley himself, kindled by past and present excitement into that glow and whirl of spirit, which is the most effectual banisher of diffidence and its concomitant *gaucheries*, let forth in well-chosen strains, the romantic verbiage wherein chivalry was accustomed to address beauty. To this, his flexible tones, and a subdued sort of fervour, partly habitual, and

partly superinduced by present feelings, lent a dangerous power. Of undeniable mental endowments, he possessed an allowable consciousness of them; and when, as now, momentarily freed from the millstone pressure that too frequently crushed them, he could take the proudest flights with a command of pinion that proved an unquestionable right to soar; his soul, thus emancipated, could assume the highest ground, and swell before the highest rank, without any sense of embarrassment. Yet these flashings out of hidden fire were accompanied by no self-forgetful arrogance; his then easy fluency warranted itself for an unlaboured and legitimate assertion of intellectual dignity. It was only when the want of lineage (raised by the Gothicism of his day into a disability) came across him, that he sunk entirely into the unobtrusive esquire.

Neither ladies were insensible to these marked emanations of a superior nature. Amisia, though

she at first met them only with that bridled suavity becoming a maid of condition to display towards one of ambiguous station, eventually yielded herself wholly to a familiar and, therefore, hazardous communion.

CHAPTER XI.

“Thou idol honour which we fools adore,
(How many plagues do rest in thee to give us,)
Which when we have, we find there is much more
Than that which only is a name can give us.”

DRAYTON.

THE late captives and their liberators continued to journey together, until the cold brown moors being wellnigh traversed, the signs of culture and habitation began distantly to appear. Hitherto, the lesser party had kept in company without nicely calculating how far their ultimate destination assimilated with that of the greater; but they had now arrived at a point where the necessity of more matured decision became obvious. This, in particular, when they

touched the fork of a faintly-beaten path, striking to the right, and winding along the edge of a tangled dean (ravine) in the direction of Hexhamshire. Here, Hugh of Hawden, calling his own people to a halt, informed Sir John that the track in question was that which it behoved him to take.

“Worshipful sir knight,” said he, raising his weather-stained chaplet, for these borderers were not without a dash of politic courtesy, “I fancy our roads will hardly lie longer in one bent, unless it beseechin thee to partake such hospitality as my poor peel of Hawden can yield:—if the which be, thou wilt confer both honour and great pleasaunce on thy willing servitor.”

“Gramercy for thy proffer, my bluff sidesman,” answered Sir John, “tho’, on more suits than one, methinks, it may not be. Mouboucher, here man; and thou, friendly sir squire; let us take counsel.”

The summons formed a signal for a general congregation of those concerned; as well in-

directly as directly, for Father Noel and Linny Tyzack both thrust themselves forward.

“ What say’st thou, my old squire ? ” said the knight, accosting Mouboucher. “ By’r lady, these times remind me of thy past function ; tho’ I misdoubt whether thou canst take to’t again as aptly ! — Shall we not to Coupland, man ? — Corsinside is, I guess, no place for us by this.”

“ Coupland is too distant, as well as of too bad approach from where we rest,” returned Mouboucher. “ ’Twere wiser, I think, to make round through Coquedale, and seek present shelter from the monks at Brinkburn. We can ride thither ere nightfall.”

“ Nay ; I like not that ; I would have my jackmen round me without delay. Rather back to yon burning walls and raise my vassals there. But then again, these dearlings must be cared for.”

“ Surely, my lord,” said Mouboucher : “ let us place the ladies in safe harbour, and then

speed a post to rouse your menyie. They will not be slack to muster.”

“ Slack enough for the bold Warden’s haste, I dare be bound. There’s no voice like the lord’s, either to call up or hound on. Spur and spear must be the word. Why shake thy head, Bertram? Dost think I am no longer the lance I was at the Red-hills?”

Bertram looked the opinion, but did not express it.

“ Sir John de Coupland,” observed Raimond, delicately, “ has already done double devoir to his country. From two generations of our northern knighthood he has born the palm of chivalry; his best deed, now, were to cherish repose, that so bright a living example may the longer continue to incite our growing warriors.”

“ Aha,” broke in Hugh, determined not to miss an opportunity of ingratiation from any scruple on pushing it too broadly. “ ’Tis well for them to put that face on’t. God’s troth !

they like not the thought o' being shamed by the same hand that shamed their fathers."

Sir John was not by nature a nice discriminating; nor was the weakness of his age proof against this 'flattering unction:' he received it greedily.

"Where blows were dealing, I've tried to play my part," he rejoined, endeavouring to repress the complacent smile that was, notwithstanding abundantly apparent, "and, mayhap, I can still. Would I were in Coupland! Then let this Scottish rout beset me, and I'd give them practice for their patience and their leeches. I still have skill to keep my hold, and in it flout at odds."

"'Twas well seen yesterday," muttered Spalding, whose disposition to sneer at what he considered the vanity of a pernicious school could not always be restrained by the dictates of decorum.

The old banneret's ear caught the sarcasm, and damping as it did the crowing satisfaction

he had just exhibited in himself, the effect was peculiarly offensive.

“ Ha ! say’st thou, malapert gownsman ! ” he exclaimed, in choler. “ Dost dare to remind me tauntingly of a mischance thine own foul trifling brought to pass. Had I friends about, thy shaven crown would hardly save thy pate. Beshrew me, if I know why I should spare it myself ! ”

“ ’Sbody and blood nor I ! ” joined in the unscrupulous dalesman, apt at a lead ; “ ’twas a base unmannered gibe, were the knave twice a friar.”

The riding-rod of Sir John, and his ready backer’s lance butt were both menacingly agitated, the latter most ostentatiously ; when Amisia interposed with the one, and Raimond with the other.

“ Dearest father,” said the young lady, “ Rage not on the holy clerk, remember his tongue is licensed.”

“ Licensed with a vengeance,” iterated Sir

John, unpacified—"but not by me. Let him cast his scorn on them that owe him tithe, I'll bear it not, were he the mitred prince of Durham."

" Yet if not for his calling's sake, bear it for mine," she urged. " The father has been kind to me in this hour of trouble."

The last argument took effect, and the knight was soothed. Hugh, whose indignation was merely reflected, did not of course prove difficult to quiet.

" Thou wert not wont, bold kinsman," said his nephew, having drawn him aside, " wholly to slight the favour of Mother Church. How dost think it would fare with thee next shriving-tide at Hexham, hadst such a sin to answer for? By the rood! absolution will halt longer o'er a misused monk, than o'er the best of blood shed on the border. Then bethink thee, man; to ride unshiven would leave thee small chance of a good prey."

" Soothly not, boy," assented Hugh. " I

like to prick on a clear bill against purgatory, as well as another. Od's heart ! I meant the clerk no harm : only I was bound to make cause wi' the old knight, when he gave the hint for't."

" Ah, uncle ! thou has large need to keep well with the lords of English land ; for thou makest sad waste on that of their neighbours."

" Ha, ha !" laughed the other, with the manner of a person agreeably complimented ; "'tis every man's duty to strip the enemy ; and I do mine in a poor way. But see, this coil's blown o'er."

" Well, sir friar !" said de Coupland, " I overpass this scurriel quip of thine ; but, prithee keep in thy canker-sting ; for, by the pix ! I will not brook it in my flesh ! And now, my masters ! let us to the gear we had in hand !"

" Venerable sir knight," began Raimond—

" Tush, man ! sir knight, without the venerable ;" interrupted the old warrior testily ;

"Thou hail'st me as tho' I'd been a monkish chronicler of gests, rather than an actor. Because thou art thyself a stripling, make me not a doting Methusaleh."

The esquire bent in acknowledgment, and amended his style.

"If I, sir knight, may presume to express an opinion, it would be to this effect. At Alnwick, or the Newcastle, our noble warden will, ere this, have unfurled his banner. Thither the force of the march will now be assembling;—Thither would Sir John despatch his personal power;—most like, accompany it?"

"Ay, of a surety."

"Then thither, I would say; 'twere best to bend at once, and let thy vassals join on summons. At either of those places the gentle demoiselles can be bestowed in safety, and thou thyself be nearest, where thy counsel and example will avail."

"'Slife! thy advice sounds heedful!" approved the knight." But the towns lie some-

what asunder; to which wouldest have us turn?"

"For a while, I recommend a medium course. News we cannot fail soon to hear, and thereby we may direct us. With your permission, I will take on me the guidance; for, if you adopt this proceeding, 'twill afford me the happiness of 'tending your steps throughout. By so doing, I am also sure to please my lord and leader." The last remark he made flatteringly emphatic.

"That I am proud to believe! Sir Harry is not one to forget his father's friends; ay, and grandsires to boot. Why Amise, wench! he hath been thy knight-bachelor at more than one justing: thou hast not found him such a niggard of his courtesy as to begrudge thee the service of his squire?"

"Oh, no!" answered Amisia, smiling; "the gallant Percy begrudges us poor maidens nought but his time; the which he devotes to a sterner mistress."

This allusion cost Raimond a pang. It was not of jealousy; for, though aware his lord had occasionally worn Amisia's colours, he knew that it was but as a compliment in the prevailing style of gallantry. What really touched him, was the strong sense the fact awakened of the lady's high pretensions, and the consequent chasm that distanced and derided his own hopes.

Meantime, the Tynedale leader had begun to fidget. He observed that his followers were getting impatient under the delay; and as many of them were wild neighbours, over whom his command was only one of sufferance, he did not care to wear out their patience. Perceiving now that de Coupland had come to a determination, he lost no time in gratifying desires wherein he himself partook.

"It seems to me, worshipful sir," he preambled, "that my simple presence here is no longer needed. Essoin me if I take my leave. I would fain see my friends lay this haining safe

in their homesteads, and then, mayhap, I'd find a few o' them willing to ride wi' me to the march-gathering. Hugh of Hawden pricks rovingly at whiles o'er moss and moor; but he would be loath to see the Scot wi' main force dare the country without lending in to gi' them their fairing."

"Wightily spoken, Hughie!" answered Sir John. "God b' wi' ye, bold varlet! and mind that thou dost keep thy last word."

"Trust me, sir knight!" Sain your ladyships—sain thee, Raimond—and mind me, boy!—a kind wish to him at home. You, gaffer Tyzack, I hear, are for poking 'mong the crannies and curse-comforts o' the great town yonder. Ye're like most o' the world, ever sitting down where they 're least looked on. But God speed ye in your own gait. Father, your benison (aside to the friar). Think no worse o' me for what's just agone—bless ye! 'twas only a make, and no harm in't."

Having thus completed his round of adieus,

the active dalesman led off his scourers and their convoy, leaving our other friends, including Spalding and the jerkin-maker, to pursue a different route. The two last were both bound for the Newcastle. With the one it had been his original goal of repair, and the other had been influenced by a promise of provision held out to him by Raimond.

The adherence of this pair, or rather trio, for Mabel must not be forgot, gave some annoyance to the worthy Bertram Mouboucher, who fore-saw their probable association with himself in a rear file. Noel he regarded as, at best, an ambiguous character, and Linny, together with his cumbrance—we beg pardon, his treasure—he viewed with undisguised contempt. He was, in fact, precisely one of those weak inferior people, who, filling by accident some reputable *post* in life, and fully conscious of no inherent patent, are either tormented by an incessant jealousy of encroachment, or labour to persuade themselves that simple unfavoured men *should* be a distinct

race of beings. The admitted great, at least, assume gracefully, and their urbanity, however frigid, prevents any resulting jar. But the *ser-vum pecus*—the aping, strutting crowd of lower imitators, are equally hateful in the manner and the deed.

“ Have with thee, then, sir squire,” cried Sir John, “ we’ll follow thy avizement, so e’en let us be making. B’y’r lady!—he pursued, after a circular look and a shrug—we ride in choice company! A beggoing friar—a lame pauper—and a trull!”

“ A century over,” rejoined the friar, “ and ’twill be all the same who rides and who walks, to-day—who threatens and who trembles—who feasts and who fasts.”

“ Ay, indeed, that time will see us all out,” said the knight, “ which is a good reason why we should spend as little o’t as may be, on this bare prospect.”

From a laudable disposition to “ inflict no more of our tediousness” upon the reader than

the better purposes of the legend doth require, we hurry over the remaining incidents of the closing day. It terminated in repose at an inconsiderable village southward of the Coquet. The previous ride was wearisome enough to all, except Amisia and Farneley, whose mutual engrossment palpably increased. His latent powers of bland oratory have been already alluded to; hers was a manner eminently qualified to draw them out, and her responses such as to furnish them material whereon to expand. He could not but perceive that he commanded a willing and gratified ear, and we all know the stimulus such a conviction supplies. Nay, he was three-and-twenty, and pardonably persuaded of his being neither a monster Falri, nor a foolish Dagonet, and, therefore, unapt to miss a warmer inference. Nor did he; but found it without substance or promise. It told him only what, under other auspices, might have been; causing additional regrets rather than forward anticipations.

But what part took Hester all this while?—a passive. She had sunk into one of those fits of apparent apathy not unusual with her. During the whole afternoon she had been reserved and thoughtful; betraying little interest in what was passing near. De Coupland and his retainer were too much engaged over the mountings and musters—the suit and service, due and called for by the invasion, to have any mind for less important matters. As a consequence, Amisia and the gallant esquire were little interrupted in communings, which fixed a lasting impression upon him, and seemed far from disagreeable to her.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Two Northumerlands ; two braver men
Ne'er spurred their coursers to the trumpet's sound.”

SHAKSPEARE.

UPON an irregular green knoll, or cluster of little hillocks rising at the south side of the stilly-flowing river Alne, stands a proud and extensive pile commanding the unwearyed gaze of every traveller whose occasions lead him along the great road to Scotland. Renovated and beautified as this spacious monument of baronial splendour has latterly been by the taste and munificence of its noble owners, it still presents a perfect idea of the original structure.

Exteriorly and interiorly the establishment is complete, and the whole preserves a more striking picture of the mingled magnificence and strength of a feudal fortress, than, save perhaps Windsor, is elsewhere extant. The modern improvements—truly such—have been managed with a judgment so nice, that they can scarcely be deemed other than a graceful restoration. The dictators seem well to have borne in mind, that in meddling with edifices of this kind, what was said of Rome and Augustus—“*Luteam invenit, lateritiam relinquit,*” is not the sort of praise to be too ardently coveted.

That delicious concatenation of round, square and octagon towers, of solid bastion and slender turret, of lofty donjon and simple curtain rampart, so highly picturesque to the eye of actual view, is unluckily the most unapproachable by the pen of description. From this cause, to trace the external figure of Alnwick Castle, would be futile; for though we might be faithful, we could not be graphic. Then, again, the

attempt would involve a double labour; once to delineate its appearance, as shrouded behind the zig-zag irregularities of the outer ballium, and next, as compact and divested of these envelopements. A general notion must suffice.

An embattled wall, the ballium just alluded to, flanked and diversified by numerous towers (some peels in themselves, others mere *guérites*) encloses a large area, entered through a barbican or gateway outwork. At the time of which we write, a deep fosse was to be previously passed by customary drawbridges, and the spikes of the remorseless portcullis projected like the teeth of a forest savage, in threatening readiness, from the succeeding arch. Once within this cincture of outer defences, the keep, or, in other words, the body of the castle, breaks upon the sight, boldly based upon a swell in the middle of the great court thereby formed. The beholder cannot fail to sustain grand impressions. His object is a stately concretion (if the expression may be allowed) of half-towers,

arranged and joined in a circular chain. These look massive and condensed, but link, really, around a central space, affording a second and hidden court-yard. Three distinct ports are to be undergone, ere this interior court can be attained. First, that of the barbican; next, one in a wall, which, connecting the keep on opposite sides with the ballium, divided the great area into two parts, *ultra* and *citra*; and, lastly, that in the curtain of the keep itself. Each of these was fortified and furnished with the means of protracting resistance; besides, the inner port being on the *ultra* side, made the approach an exposed sweep. Hence it may be conceived, that no ordinary perseverance would be required to force a way into a fortress, in the fruitless siege whereof one Scottish monarch lost his liberty, and another his life.

The battlements possess a distinguishing feature, which should not escape notice. They are every way surmounted by stone figures, sculptured in the various acts of ancient

defence ; hurling down stones, darts, and the like. As seen from below, the effect is curious. Above all, soars an exploratory turret, doubtless of great use to the ancient garrison as an outlook, and interesting now, from the fine and varied stretch of country commanded. If it be true, that

————— “ noble houses
Have no such goodly prospects any way
As into their own land !”

the lords of Alnwick will there enjoy a peculiar visual treat.

Alternately in this princely hold, and in the almost equally imposing strength of Warkworth, a few miles distant, the puissant Percies were wont to keep feudal state, whilst upon their northern domains. At the period to which this story relates, it was the abiding-place of one of the most celebrated barons of the name. The head of this house has always been a historical character ; but he, of whom we are about to speak, was prominently such.

Henry, the sixth Lord de Percy, and first Earl of Northumberland, won his earliest martial reputation under the third Edward ; this last dignity, conferred on him at the coronation of the reigning monarch, together with the baton of Earl Marshal of England, were honours due to him as well for past services, as in deference to his power and possessions. The dominant chief, —we may say prince, of the English marches, he was the bulwark of the border, and the scourge of the turbulent beyond Tweed. By him the much contested town of Berwick had been more than once wrested back from the Scots, when surprise or treachery had temporarily possessed them thereof.

Notwithstanding these claims to gratitude he had latterly endured but scurvy treatment from the court. A quarrel with his quondam friend, the famous John of Gaunt, had made that potent personage his enemy, and his influence imbued the king's councils. Hence, the earl was harassed with unworthy suspicions, and his

patriotism impeached by a charge to which obvious facts gave a stultifying refutation. If from this he experienced some disgust, and afterwards showed it in action, by the part he took in what Fordun terms “the conspiracy of the three Henries,” there is no matter of wonder; though certainly it is a little remarkable, that the specific result should have been to place the crown upon the head of his old abuser’s son.

This great nobleman was a man of strong resolutions and ambitious designs—daring in conception, but wary in act. He is not to be confounded amidst the herd of mere warring peers, with whom the age abounded; being distinguished by a reasoning, inquiring mind, and an expanded liberality of sentiment, far from general. Both qualities are approved in his manly support of Wickliffe and his principles. For, without the first, he would never have seen their justice, and without the second, never have dared to risk the consequences of open patronage. Moral courage is incomparably more to be lauded

than that embodied in the animal impulses of fight; inasmuch as the latter is an attribute common to the brute, and wherein man seems the more to partake the nearer he is unto it allied. Our earl was, however, supereminently valiant; so, to such degree, that we find him in song and legend mostly denominated the “stout” Northumberland.

But, in martial renown, the head of the Percies had a sharer, and even a surpasser, of whom he nevertheless felt no envy:—

“Sic magna cedit titulis Agamemnonis Atreus,
Egeo sic Theseus, sic Pelea vincit Achilles.”

This was his eldest son, the celebrated Hotspur: of whose commanding qualities he was most justly proud. These he had already begun to yield that associated exercise, which enabled him, “being in no debt to years,” to lead

———— “ancient lords and reverend bishops on
To bloody battles and to bruising arms.”

It is our business now to usher the reader into the ultra-division of the castle-base court, into which the inferior domestics and ordinary retainers were forbidden to intrude. There, towards the evening of a fine summer's day, pacing to and fro under the shade of the ballium, walked two individuals of marked mien and lofty carriage. Both were richly clad;—their tunics furred and embroidered;—gold chains round their necks;—and wearing embossed girdles, from which depended dudgeon daggers richly chased and jewelled. Yet did these investments rather seem the accidents of rank than indicative of much regard for externals in their wearers. They were of different ages: the one being past his meridian, the other, only approaching it. The elder was an extremely square-chested, solidly built personage, with a complexion that having once been fair and florid, had afterwards settled into a universal ruddy brown. This continued; except that the colour was now a little broken by the visible meanderings of minute veins.

His upper lip, and all the lower part of his face, was covered by a thick but grizzly beard, close trimmed ; which, together with the keen flashing survey of his eye, gave a stern awe-begetting expression to a physiognomy otherwise neither harsh nor repelling. On his head he wore a cap of Genoa velvet, ornamented with goldsmith's work, and coning inartificially at the crown, after a fashion more suited to the taste of his day than ours.

The younger peripatetic, from the strong family likeness prevailing betwixt himself and companion, might at once be pronounced his son. He had the same embrowned rubor of *teint*—the same large, unblanching blue orbs,—and a frame, which, if not so massive, was even more muscular and sinewy. His step, firm and elastic, seemed at each remove to spurn the humble earth beneath. In his lineaments, he was handsome ; though they were irregular and strongly defined ; suggesting an energetic temperament. A fringe of short, curling dark

hair crept from cheek to cheek, slightly tufting the chin, and adding the last touch of manhood to a countenance peculiarly manly.

These were the Earl of Northumberland and Sir Henry Percy.

“ How long is’t, Harry,” demanded the earl, as they sauntered, enjoying the freshness of the hour, “ since that designer Dunbar—he of March, quitted this country with his espial train ??”

“ His safeconduct expired a little month ago,” replied Sir Henry; “ and he made homeward on the instant: knowing full well I would not have spared his earlship one moment longer. Doubtless he is now schooling this Aberdeen convocation of which we hear so much. He wears a wily head; and, my warrant on’t! has not traversed our plains without conning a task for timely repetition.”

“ Like enough—nay, in him, a surety. Neither he nor his bull-brained brother Moray,

have forgot the fair of Roxburgh, and what grew therefrom."

"Nor have I—as they shall yet learn," ejaculated Sir Henry.

"Nay, methinks we cleared hands with them on that lay—gave them a breakfast their stomachs have not yet digested."

"I wish their sour bigg was stronger, or that they had a better potable!"

"Why that, Hal?"

"Um!—then, perchance, a double morning-draught might give them heart to spell their spleen within my hearing—that's all."

"They had rather write it on our lands, boy, and after, leave us to read at leisure. If I'm not much misminded, the prank will be essayed anon. A malison on the ill-jointed policy, that could admit such wild foxes to burrow in English warrens—to haunt our barn-yards, and mark the inlets and seasons fitting future depredation! Oh, Jesu! that a noble realm

like this should be the toy—the plaything of a popinjay and his galliards! 'Tis well all that own the blood of Plantagenet are not alike,* or the saucy Scot might ride rampant to the gates of York, and ne'er be stayed."

"Pity he were not set aside for a more legitimate scion of the house," observed Hotspur, carelessly, yet pithily.

"Legitimate!—how mean ye? His descent and title may not be questioned."

"They may. Your true bastard is he whose life disgraces his name. I wot so does that of this Plantagenet."

"Tush! you talk idly," rejoined the earl, in a tone conveying little of reproof, though something of impatience. "What were the last advices from the border? Whoever rules Hal, to *England* we will be true."

"As the sun to his rising hour, come cloud, come tempest! But for thy quest—I hear nought

* The mother of the Earl, was Mary Plantagenet; granddaughter to King Henry the Third.

of active mischief; much that betokens thought on't. The Captain of Jedburgh reports me, that his communications are watched—that his men cannot leave the fortress without danger of being cut off. This would seem intended, at once to keep him hoodwinked, and to anticipate his vigilance, should the hood chance to slip. Yesterday, I despatched my esquire, young Farneley, and others, to push active observation! Albeit, I scarcely believe they will attempt an inroad, when they know the Percy is at home. Yon foxes you but now denounced, will warn their fellows to beware the watch-dog—the Brabant lion."

The concluding Thrasonics must not be interpreted to the disparagement of Sir Henry's modesty: they breathed merely one of those light, half-meant sallies continually indulged between intimates, and generally passing untaxed. "As to that," observed the sire, in rejoinder, "it may not prove a certain staff to lean on—your Scot is not lacking in hardihood.

'Then, 'tis said, the Douglas covets to cross lances with thee personally ; and he himself can raise a pretty power."

"The Douglas is a proper knight; but were he twice the same, he shall find me prompt to shock him, or any Scot that dares this march while Harry Percy is its intrusted conservator."

"I doubt it not, Hal," said the earl, glancing complacently at the person of his son, "thou hast given such assurance of thy quality as may stand for so much. I am glad, however, thou hast taken good precautions. He who is fain to venture all on blows, may make a stout man-at-arms, but hardly be a fitting leader. And now it minds me, thou couldst not have selected a more likely emissary than that same Farneley. Apt and courageous—he hath parts that spring beyond his humble breeding."

"I know it, father, and have thence preferred him, to the complaint of others better graced in birth."

"Right, Harry! Choose your wife by her blood—your friend by his honour—but in him you would employ, seek wit and capability."

"Nay, I hold this youth e'en at a higher rate. An oak is an oak, let it root where it may. I *do* put faith in blood, but 'tis as I do in a friend's promise—equally to be recalled upon fail of action-proof. On the other hand, where I discover *all* I can expect in man, full grown and palpable, I am content. I see the flower—the effect—the perfect thing itself: what need I *then* care about the accessories;—the mixture—the mode of production. I consider a good lineage as a good soil; but I will neither offend my taste with sour fruit therefrom, nor reject sweet because raised upon a moor."

"Well said, boy; tho' somewhat more in Ralph's way than I expected from thee. There is no monopoly of merit, and therefore should be none of distinction. Dolts and drivellers may dread competitors in honour: not so, I firmly trust, the children of our house. Nathe-

less, whilst I approve thy patronage of this tried young man, I may not forget that the commonage abounds with froth-pated, over-saucy knaves, who, void of equal deserts, await but like encouragement to jostle us at board, and hail us on the highway. These have lungs, but not brains—thewes and sinews, but not generous governance: they would bellow amidst our harmony, and think it song—riot in our fields, and deem it gentle disport. Such, and they are many, it were unmeet to license. They must be ruled, like our steeds, by pressure of the bit, and that we can best employ by keeping steadfast in the saddle."

Sir Henry made no reply, doubtless well satisfied with his father's views. Enlightened, according to their day, both were still imbued with the established doctrines of feudal superiority; and could not be expected to undervalue by implication their high strain, flowing direct from Mainfred and the royal line of Brabant.

A pause of a few minutes succeeded, during which they quietly pursued their retrogressive walk.

“When my Lord Dunbar was in England, he sojourned, I believe, some time at Raby,” propounded the earl, resuming, “did he not?”

“He did, my lord,” confirmed the son, with a slight shrug.

“Truly, my brother-in-law is most exemplary in his hospitable extensions! Friend, stranger,—and even foe, when way-cast—have their several claims; but this lengthened sojourning, this visit on solicitation, takes an aspect less freely to be lauded, in the latter case. Guess ye Dunbar’s commendation to this friendly harbourage?”

“I’ faith, I know of none, saving it were his being your lordship’s enemy. ’Tis no news to tell thee of the Neville’s jealousy.”

“Nor of its schemes to thwart me; yet as an English noble—a baron of the east-march,

he ought not to have tolerated such company.”

“ Pooh ! he is not thin-skinned. Some men, now, could see the thing amiss. There was the hot old knight of Coupland, as I hear, broke off a visit to Raby when he heard who were to be his board-mates.”

“ Ah ! old king-taker!—’twas like him. He will yield scant courtesy to the best Scot that ere was belted. That spirit, in the main, cannot be commended, tho’ here I do confess I’m glad ’twas shown. By the way, De Coupland has a fair daughter, and something was bruited of an alliance in that quarter. Is it true ?

“ Mayhap. I wot not of it.”

“ Why, now I remember, thou thyself didst once, in thy way, admire the demoiselle. Peradventure, this rumour doth not please thee. Ah, Hal ! thou art ever too remiss in thy devotions—too abrupt in manner—too unvarnishing in speech, to trap the hearts, or rather, to sway the caprice of beauteous dames.”

“ I will take my revenge, then, by ruling the moods of their lords and more favoured suitors,” returned Sir Henry. Touching the fair De Coupland, she is a fine frank-hearted wench, and deserves to match with the best of our chivalry.”

“ To wit, with Harry Percy?”

“ Ay, or his better—when he is found.”

“ You think her charms transcendent still—hegh?”

“ You are curious, my lord,” said Hotspur, his quick temper taking fire at the idea of being put to question, even by his sire, and upon a subject from which he had no actual cause to wince.

“ Perhaps I am. Is there ought marvellous in such curiosity? Where maids have dazzling brows gallants will gaze, and fathers will inquire. But, no matter. This only wakes, not binds, my thoughts; their cast is forward. A hint, Hal, ere I drop. The son of Northumberland may ally himself to the throne itself.

The splendour of our name has not yet filled its sphere ; be thou the means of giving it expansion."

" I have tried, father, already."

" And done well. In thy bent, thou need'st no prompting. In what I would move to thee, thou'rt not so apt. Ha ! what brings thy brother, striding in haste. He looks brim o'er with news."

Both immediately stayed their steps, and awaited the approach of a gallant-looking youth, of lighter proportions and softer mien than Hotspur. He wore a close riding-cassock of fine Flanders cloth, and his buskins had more of the fashionable peak than either of his relatives. A spreading summer cap and slender spurs, indicated his recent return from a peaceful excursion. Behind him toiled, with unsteady steps, a dismounted hobyler, flushed and disordered, as much perhaps by being conducted into such high presence, as by a hurried and anxious previous ride.

Even before the younger Percy had reached a fair speaking distance, his mental charge sough vent in utterance.

"My lord—brother," he cried. "Here's call for harness—matter to end your shady walk. In fine, there's a mighty raid upon the march."

"Take breath, good Ralph," said Hotspur. "'Tis not to the young dames at Mitford, that you bring the tidings. I, for one give you gramercy for tale of coming disport. To-morrow we'll to't merrily, and chase the reivers home again. I hope they'll stay so long!"

"Brother, this is no moonlight foray—no course of common snatchers. The Douglas, Dunbar, and I know not what other chiefs, are out. Their force is large in men-at-arms, and all bespeaks some main intendment. Judge by this man's report."

"Ha—soh!" ejaculated Hotspur, now kindling into flame. "The bloody heart unfurled, and kissing English air! stalworth lances too,

as well as rascaille border scourers ! By St. Oswin ! this promises us employment !”

“ Peace awhile, pray !” said the earl, assuming the stately command that became his station. “ Let me examine this fellow, and then proceed on sound direction.”

Before, however, he had time to ask more than a few questions, a retainer appeared, to announce the arrival of other posts, and a general stirrage could be perceived in the castle. On this, the earl summoned his sons to follow him to the great hall ; there to take affairs into mature consideration, upon full intelligence.

We will not stay to remark upon the lofty portal and fine octagon towers, which, from this division of the base court, give admission to the inner ward of the great keep ; neither will we linger in our passage through that ward ; but hurry on into the spacious hall, where the earl now put forth all the attributes of a powerful feudatory. Elevated on his baronial state, as it was termed, and having his noble sons on either hand, he received from several jaded

messengers their divers relations. His seneschal, constable, and chamberlains, all knights of family, stood near ; and behind, “ Northumberland,” the Pursuivant of the household, in his gaudy tabard, shewed himself at his post. Esquires and pages crowded round ; and fraught with curious interest, pressed closer on their master’s counsels than was quite compatible with decorum. From the same cause, the lower hall exhibited a throng of eager men-at-arms, many of whom ventured to edge forward, in the hope of catching some droppings of information. Other domestics, and even the retained minstrels, though well aware this was no occasion for the display of the *joyeuse science*, mingled among the whispering groups ; the long gowns and smooth tonsures of the latter serving to contrast with the bright jacks and rough pollis (of course bared) appertaining to the martial menye. On every arm, except those of knightly owners, glinted the silver crescent, the badge of their common lord.

“ And say’st thou the tower of Corsinside

has been ta'en and sacked?" demanded the earl, examining a courier in continuation.

" Ay, my lord. I saw it smoking from the top of Ottercaps."

" De Coupland and his family were there at the time, 'tis understood. Is it known what has befallen them?"

None could answer directly, but the opinion ran something near what the reader knows to have been the truth.

" The spoilers then marched southwards?" pursued the earl.

" Not thence, my lord, they first came down east as far as Rothely crag," said one informant.

" And afterwards turned off," added another, " bending down upon the fords of Tyne, as if they intended falling on the bishopric" (meaning the county of Durham).

" Then the good folks of the Newcastle have barred their gates betimes," observed the earl, " that's well. I marvel that, with such a force, the Scots have passed the town;—if so it prove."

" Your lordship forgets there are rich pastures

and many an open hall in Weardale," remarked an experienced knight of the household, "these invaders care not to waste dear time before a wall-girt town."

" Yet we are playing with that thing so dear, sir constable," said the young lord warden, who had been pressing his own course of interrogatories among the harbingers. " Instant order must be taken. My lord," addressing his father, I am bound to ask your voice in this."

The earl, after eliciting further information, mused a moment before he gave the solicited opinion.

" Yes," he resumed, assenting, as it were, to his own thought:—" 'tis their return we must provide for."

" Why not follow on their heels?" exclaimed Hotspur, warmly. " If they have abused De Coupland, I'll make it a deadly feud."

" Harry," said the earl, gravely, " you are the king's warden-general in the marches, and must keep ward for the preservation of the whole. How that can best be done is now to be considered."

" By pursuing the foemen to the death," re-

joined Hotspur, warmly, “ there is no room to pause on that.”

“ No—but some on the means. Have you present power to meet the force we’re advertised of?—I’ll answer for you—no.”

“ The marchmen are not losels,” quick rejoined Sir Henry, “ I’ll forward, and take up strength upon the way.”

“ Thou shalt forward, and thou shalt so gather force; but list to what account. The good town of the Newcastle is without garrison, and exposed, a rich prize, to these ravagers. It must be secured, or a heavy disgrace falls on us. Recollect, the surprise of one town formerly cost me dear. This is my counsel. You, Harry, and you, Ralph, repair instantly to that place, and take charge of its defence. If then and there you gather spears and bows enough, fall out in St. George’s name. Meantime, I will remain here, and make a levy from Glendale and the shires,* either to back ye, or cut off these

* The northernmost districts of the English east march: Bambrough, Norham, and Island-shires.

Scots in their retreat. Thus will we beset this Douglas; and with one Percy before, and another behind, he shall deeply rue the Lammas-tide, that ere he thought to prank it in Northumberland."

A chorus of approval followed from the knightly functionaries in attendance.

" You shall be obeyed, father; and straight-way," replied Sir Henry, " so far I curb in my impatient wishes. Ho, there! Knayton—Salvayn—my esquires!—To horse, ye that are of my following! To horse and muster!—we're away within the hour. Brother Ralph, be stirring!"

So saying, he hurried to arm, and was imitated by his brother.

The shrill peal of clarions anon interpreted this summons to the ears of distant loiterers, and, incontinently, the courts of the castle echoed with the tramp of hoofs and clink of arms. In a brief space after, the two Percies, leading a choice band of lances, issued from the gates, and took the road towards the Newcastle.

CHAPTER XIII.

“A new fellow
A mere upstart that has no house—no coat,
No ensigns of a family.

Fulvia. He has virtue.

Sempronia. Marry! virtue! where there is no blood 'tis vice,
And, in him, sauciness.”

Catiline. BEN JONSON.

AFTER a night's repose, Sir John de Coup-
land, and the oddly-assorted coterie congreg-
ated with him, again committed themselves to
the dominion of the Viales. As they proceeded,
information on every hand transpired, which
finally determined them to make the Newcastle
their resort. The Scottish army, they were
assured, had marched on towards Durham,
and consequently left the country open to their
wishes. Something, too, they heard of the

young Lord Warden's movements, which had a still more effectual influence. As the journey, though slow, and occupying nearly the whole of the day, presents no feature, save the increasing sympathy that grew betwixt a certain esquire and demoiselle ; and as that displayed itself pretty much in the way it ever has, does, and will do, we decline detaining the reader upon the road.

Twilight had given objects a dim and shadowy outline, when the party arrived within sight of the ancient town, the busy hum from which, borne upon the stilly air of the evening, at the same time reached them. In this early century it was a considerable place, and though not boasting, as now, the dignity of being a county in itself, had the nucleus of its present wealthy corporation embodied in a mayor and four bailiffs. The facilities for commerce, which a fine navigable river, and no great distance from the sea, afford, had already given a trading character to the inhabitants, but not in

a pre-eminent degree. Circumstances of a very opposite nature tended rather to divert than encourage the disposition, which, nevertheless, made gradual way. Strangely enough, these operated at once by hardening and softening manners. As thus: the exposed situation of the place, and its importance as a fortified border-town, naturally familiarized the burgesses with the duties of watch and ward, and thence begat in many something of martial roughness and adventure; whilst again, the unusual number of religious houses located in the bounds, tinged a large body of dependants with contrary habits. Moreover, a multitude of wild, broken men, from both sides of the frontier, resorted hither, betwixt whom and the established townspeople no very amicable understanding prevailed. As it was, a dense and mixed population crowded within the walls. These same, duly embattled, and flanked by frequent towers, and more frequent *guerites*, formed a complete girdle of defences, amounting to an

almost perfect fortification against anything short of a prolonged siege. Beyond was a sufficient graff or moat. Stately gate-houses, strongly defended, and covered by advanced barriers, opened passage to and from the different quarters of the town.

To one of these, known by the name of the Pilgrim's Gate, (from the numerous wayfarers of that class who passed through it in resort to a celebrated shrine in the vicinity, that of Our Lady of Jesu-mount) our friends betook themselves. The usual hour of closing was past, but owing to the watchfulness in which the warders were kept by events without, and the necessity that existed for admitting, from time to time, the straggling squads of vassal soldiery gathering in from the country, the travellers had not long to await ingress. The presence of Farneley, who was known to the burghers on duty, anticipated any demur.

As they progressed down the antiquated thoroughfare known as the Pilgrim's Street,

they found it lined with loiterers; not, according to wont, with pale faces and in frieze gowns, but in steel coats and of bluff sun-burnt aspect. The dark figures of some itinerants were certainly here and there visible, but in no proportion to the others. Every thing wore the appearance of what we will venture to denominate, commotion in repose. More than ordinary light streamed from most casements, and sounds issued from many houses betokening the entertainment of guests.

De Coupland's probable intention had been to abide, for the night at least, in one of the hostelries, of which the best were, from obvious causes, in the Pilgrim's Street; but the eligibility of this design he now saw reason to doubt.

“By my fay! Bertram,” he observed, to his ancient follower, “we'll find scant lodging-room at the hostels, and it so late! To thou and I, the being a whit jostled will make little matter, but these tenderlings may take it somewhat less happily.”

“Of a truth, my lord,” answered Moubou-

cher, “it is not well to think of. Wherefore, do’st not bemind thee that thy noble friend, my Lord Neville, hath a mansion here ? Let us thither, and make demand of hospitality. I wot ’twill be right gladly accorded.”

“ Questionless.—Nor had I forgotten the fact, good Bertram. But I know his lordship to be himself elsewhere, and doubt me whether any of his house be now in residence.”

“ Suppose it, sir ; *you* can still command reception ; or at any rate, procure apartments for the young dames.”

“ Why, aye ! that indeed may be essayed.” approved the knight. “ Amise, child ! thou canst sleep out of thy father’s hearing for a night or two, when thy bower is under the roof of the noble Neville.—Hey, canst thou not ??”

“ How means my father ??” demanded the demoiselle.

Sir John explained. A look of meaning then passed betwixt Amisia and her friend, which was followed by a brief whisper.

“Come, wench, answer me ;” demanded the old banneret : then, putting on a sagacious face he added, “What ! thou would’st learn if thy looks have been proof against the day’s fatigues, and if thy head-tire will bear a gallant’s scrutiny ?—Aha ! rogue, I see the way thy thoughts run.”

There was also a silent observer, who fancied he could divine the turn of the maiden’s thoughts ; but who was far from doing it with the same good-humoured satisfaction. We need not name him.

“Indeed, dearest father,” commenced Amisia, with more of hesitation than the occasion seemed to call for, “you misjudge my pause. ‘Tis that I fear—or rather I dislike ——” she faltered.

“Amise doubts the propriety of resorting thither in such fashion,” said Hester, coming to her friend’s aid, “that is the simple truth of all.”

“Ha ! no fear of thy allowing us to lack a

downright tale," rejoined Sir John. " But say, wherefore, sweetheart?"

" If Sir John had been as shrewd a squire of dames, as he has been a burly one at arms, he had not needed to have asked," replied Hester. " Lend me thine ear, and I will school thee, sir."

With this she drew closer to the knight, and hinted some objections which were unheard by the rest.

" Silly wench!" he muttered, after listening with a half-smile. " And yet, after all, de Coup-land's heiress should not seem to go a-marketing! What then's to be done?"

At this moment Raimond, whom a variety of feelings had restrained, claimed attention, and proffered the whole party an asylum at the abode of his father.

" We have chambers enow," he subjoined, " and I venture to pronounce that Miles Farneley's means to grace, will not fall far short of his pleasure in acknowledging, such honourable

guests. I had this in thought before, but waited acquaintance with your arrangements ere I should intrude the proposal. If I have now been too bold —”

“ Whew !” interrupted Sir John. “ Hold ! and do not try to fool us. O’ my stars ! thou art mighty audacious—vastly presuming, to threaten hungry folks with food, and tired ones with shelter ! On, on, sir squire, we’ll to thy haven. Gramercy for the will on’t.”

The affair thus settled, they resumed their slow and cautious passage down the ill-paved thoroughfare.

“ By the way,” observed the knight, addressing Raimond as they rode together, “ did I not hear yon pricker of Hawden call thee nephew ?”

“ You did, sir knight,” was the desperately wrung-out reply.

“ And thy sire, sir squire, is — ?”

“ An hoastman of the town here.”

“ Um !—Farneley.—What, the rich bailiff ?”

"A bailiff; and passing well in worldly acquisitions."

"The first instance I ever heard of a dale-born man becoming a merchant and a burgess!" exclaimed de Coupland, with the air of one who has met a marvel. "How came it about, good squire; the townsmen, confound them for a few pennyfee'd scroyles! were wont to have an ill eye to such?"

It may be fairly imagined, that the jet of the old knight's queries put Raimond on the rack; and tried him the more, that he was wise enough to know the policy of meeting them with apparent indifference.

"My father," said he, "left the dales young. For the place he now holds in the estimation of his neighbours, I never heard that he was indebted to ought, save his own probity and perseverance."

"That is to say, he stuck to his booth, and never trimmed his scale-beam."

"It is to say, sir knight, that he has done his

duty as a good liegeman, a good citizen, and a good master."

" Well," ejaculated Sir John, who had all a proud baron's contempt for ignoble traders, " that praise be to him ! Such men are useful. Peradventure, sir squire, thou hadst done as well to have followed his life and example."

" He had done best," muttered Spalding, who was an overhearer.

" Aye, truly, as things have been cast," renewed the knight, led on by the friar's commentary, the drift of which he entirely mistook.

Sore as Raimond habitually felt upon this subject, so thoughtlessly blunt a remark would at any time have made him wince painfully; but, uttered in Amisia's hearing, the torture equalled a dip in Phlegethon. We dare not attempt to analyze his feelings, lest we become too *fine* for simple comprehensions. He preserved a stately silence.

Sir John, who had spoken with all the single-

mindedness of a thick-witted dignitary addressing an inferior he deems unentitled to possess nice sensibilities, really meant nothing offensive. Afterwards, however, either attacked by that peculiar intuition which, in such cases, is felt by the dullest of mortals; or, as we have some reason to believe, advertized by a monitory tap from the riding-rod of his daughter, he saw that he had done amiss. Thence, he next endeavoured to explain away, and, as invariably happens, floundered the worse.

“ Essoin my freedom, fair sir squire!” he apologized; “ ’twas not thy personal gifts I glanced at—them I have seen cause to approve. It did but cross me, how little thy chance kindred did like to help a career of chivalry.”

“ They have already helped him to all that kindred can,” interposed Father Noel, dogmatically.

“ Ho! thy tongue again!” cried de Coup-land, not sorry to seize on a diversion; “ Me-thought, sir gownsman, thou hadst ta’en mind

to confine thy wisdom to the lame disciple thou hast newly found. Prithee make plain thy saw to us—'tis somewhat dark."

"I say, then," complied Noel, "the progenitors of this youth have transmitted to him every attribute essential to a warrior. They have helped him to active limbs, firm nerves, and quick eyes. I wot not what else he lacks at their hands to drive a trade of blows."

This did not seem exactly orthodox to Sir John; but, now awakened to consciousness with regard to the young esquire, he did not care to publish his disagreement. Hester, however, at no time repressed by circumstances, was not equally forbearing.

"You have left out the heart, Sir Friar," said she, "the seat of power whence all these baser accessories derive impulse and direction."

"Have not all men hearts?" demanded Spalding, drily,

"Yes! But most do lack the generous blood

that gives them energy. To stoop to thine own apparent mode of reasoning—how do we choose our gallant steeds—our hawks—our hounds?—why, by their blood and breeding, which we never find deceptive but when tainted.”

“ You favour me, lady, by the allusion,” said the friar, “ animal qualities alone—pith—swiftness—and the like, are what we seek and prize in these creatures! Such we *do* find inherited, as well as the reverse defaults. But to extend this kind of comparative to men, would go nigh to transfer gentility to the sturdy, deep-breathed serfs who till the parent soil. If thy argument rests there, 'tis crushed, indeed.”

More might have followed, but immediate concerns intervened.

They had, by this time arrived at a part of the street, where, after leading past an ancient church, it terminates by an abrupt wheel into a steep narrow way, descending to the lower town. Down this they were about to turn, when they perceived it filled with a blaze of

light, and heard the clamours of a noisy multitude advancing upwards. The downward way, even if clear of obstacles, promised to be awkward and perilous to horse passengers, and thence was suggested the prudence of awaiting the issue of the tumult. With that view, they reined up as close as possible to the church wall, leaving sufficient space for the throng to pass, should it, as seemed probable, be necessary. It proved a proper precaution, for the increasing glare and swell of sound proclaimed gradual approach; and a rabble of boys, invariably the unhired harbingers of a more imposing train, began to stream into sight. The notes of pipe and tabor became also distinguishable, and enabled the young esquire to anticipate the nature of the coming procession. It consisted, in fact, of a large body of the townsfolk, engaged in the holiday ceremony of setting the “midsummer watch;” of which they formed the portion called the marching rounds.

First came a group of morris-dancers, anticly

habited, and playing gambols as they proceeded. Next followed the brethren of one of the borough guilds bearing partizans ; and after, constables and other officials, in purple jormets. A long train of cresset bearers succeeded, illuminating the street, and forming the principal feature of the occasion. Jocularity and freakish humour prevailed over all, and was manifested by recurring bursts of jolly laughter, and an incessant fire of quips and jests directed at the quiet folks who peeped forth from their doors and windows. Of these, our travellers had to endure a share, but in other respects the merry mob moved on without giving them permanent annoyance.

The custom under observation, has long fallen into desuetude, together with most of the simple and heartier usages of our ancestors. We are not, in general, *laudatores temporis acti*, nor do we uphold this special example ; but we certainly do regret that the warm attachment shewn in influential quarters to cumbrous and anomalous legacies of antiquity, should not

have been extended to the few little carnivals which once helped to relieve the monotony of a humble and laborious life.

Towards the close of the procession, mounted on a sleek nag, covered with a footcloth, rode a personage, whose consequential air and frequently elevated wand, announced the claimant of worship. He was a man below the ordinary stature ; so much, as to be barely rescued from insignificance by a tendency to corpulence, and a full rubicund *frontispiece*. A voluminous hood and flowing robe of crimson samite, guarded with sables, enshrined his dignity ; also contributing to give him bulk and importance. His features were for the most part trained into a cast of decorous gravity ; but now and then, that would change into a sort of affected swagger, which seemed intended to raise an opinion that the party was no timorous home-bred spirit. This, in particular, was exhibited when the sallies of a knot of young cavaliers, who pranced and frolicked around him, required

some rejoinder. From the dress and manner of the latter, it was easy to see that they were not of the class of burgesses; but, probably, stripplings of gentle connexion, who sought amusement in attending the rounds.

On coming opposite to where our friends stood, this civic authority reined up his palfrey, and bestowed on them a scrutinizing look, as if he weighed in his mind whether it were not his duty as a careful magistrate to take some further note of them. In this act, he was imitated by his free circle of gallants; they being attracted by the presence of two females like Amisia and Hester.

The stoppage was immediately followed by a recognition, and affectionate greeting, between the functionary and Raimond Farneley. The relation in which they stood will be readily surmised.

“Wend on, wend on, friends,” cried the bailiff, waving his wand in signal. “I’ve got other gear to look to here. Master Wardell,

take thou my place, and see that the roisterers be duly governed ; giving the while, fair license to honest game. When the round is finished, spare not the cakes and ale. Gentle gallants ! (turning to the circle of cavaliers) I give ye thanks for sportive company, and wish ye good e'en. Let me redd ye not to over-weary yourselves in this night's play : there may be both livelier and deadlier to-morrow, I wot, wherein ye'll want all your pith."

Having thus thrown off his charge of office, Master Miles Farneley returned to the felicitations he had interrupted for that purpose.

" Raimond—my boy—my life's hope !" he exclaimed, " the sight of thee puts joy into my heart ; and so it will into another's, as I need not assure thee. Ah ! I see what thou would'st ask—she is well—thy mother's only grief springs from thy absence. Haste with me and end it."

" Stay, father"—said Raimond, directing attention to his party—" Here are worshipful strangers who require our cares."

“ Oh ! I am forgetful !—’tis in the delight of seeing thee safe after the ill rumours we’ve been frighted with. Commend me to thy company, and bid them make my house their own.”

“ I have done it already.”

“ I’m the better pleased ; for thereby didst thou approve thy father.”

“ Understand then, sir, that it is the baron of Coupland, and the gracious demoiselles of his family, who have consented so far to honour you.”

Whilst the bailiff bowed long and low to this announcement, he was forestalled in the set phrase of welcome he meditated, by the interposition of one of those sprigs of quality before noticed, who, pertinaciously loitering behind the rest, had also been an auditor. This was a tall, handsome youth, of exterior bespeaking high rank, and having the confident air that avowed a superabundant sense of it. He was bravely attired in a pounced and broidered body-dress of Florentine silk, with wide poke sleeves,

and every way loose, except where tightly confined round the loins with a richly studded girdle. The skirts were only allowed to fall to about the middle of the thigh, being then doubled curiously inward, and, as it were, returned to the waist; thus shewing the whole of the lower limbs. These, in the present instance, were shapely enough to warrant the exposure; though scarcely improved by the preposterously pointed pantoufle in which they terminated. A light cap of parcel tissue, and drooping feather, completed his investment; surmounting a countenance, fair and glowing, but indicative of overweening self arrogation.

“ I could not be mistaken !” he ejaculated, thrusting eagerly forward, and saluting the de Couplands’ with graceful but familiar courtesy. “ Save thee, fair ladies ! (vailing his bonnet) save thee, worthy sir knight !—I may hardly give ye joyous welcome, seeing that your coming has not been a thing of choice. News of thy surprizal, renowned Sir John, hath reached us.

Well 'twas no worse! Well thou hast escaped the Scot in person! By the light of love's own eyes! and those are thine, fairest Amise, hadst thou been carried off, the border chivalry had sworn a crusade for thy recovery."

"Do thou then on their part, thank this young esquire for saving them the vow," rejoined Hester—"Twas nigh being called for, I can tell thee, and might have proved a whit too trying".

"Not so, I cry your mercy, pretty Mistress Hester"—replied the cavalier, without deigning to notice the allusion to Raimond, "its being known that thou didst partake the duress, would have doubled our force, and made it irresistible."

"Nathless"—observed Sir John, "the long arm of the Percy befriended them as well—nay, all the better, for being earlier outstretched."

This remark caused the stranger to turn his eyes inquiringly upon Raimond, whose person

he appeared to recognize, though he did not see fit to acknowledge acquaintance.

“ You look puzzled, Sir Rafe,” said Hester, whose disposition to say unpalatable things is not unknown. “ The truth is, we owe our rescue to a retainer of the Percy, and that is no marvel; the cognizance of that puissant house being, as thou art aware, ever seen where service is to do upon the marches. This esquire is he.”

Sir Ralph, or *Rafe*, of Raby, (for a future distinction we use the latter surname) did not, as the lady pre-supposed, receive the above explanation with any overflow of complacency. As a son of the powerful lord Neville, who divided with the Earl of Northumberland the homage of the north, he was not likely to listen to the praises of the rival family with a very gratified ear. Not that any positive enmity existed between these two frontier princes, on the contrary, they were allied by marriage; but there was certainly such an emulation—such a

craving to engross honour and influence, as often threatened an approach to it.

The young Neville had also a private whimsey which induced him to disrelish the topic ; he therefore, passed it without apparent regard. Rudely overlooking Miles Farneley's right of pre-audience, and obvious wish to exercise it, he still continued to engage de Coupland.

" And may I ask," he demanded, " what makes my honoured friend in this quarter of the town ? Methought that Neville House would have been his first resort ; to which this is an unnecessary circuit."

" Why, in sooth, gallant Sir Rafe," answered, the banneret, his blunt candour not suggesting any polite varnish, " I had thought of it, as, indeed, I might have thought on other mansions open to me ; but, in short, I have accepted entertainment with the worthy bailiff, here."

" My honourable master, most noble knight," appended Mouboucher, who was a great stickler for dignities, and felt somewhat scandalized at

Sir John's undue and clumsily qualified preference, "believed my lord of Neville to be elsewhere in abidance, and—"

"What still of that?" interrupted Sir Rafe, looking only to Sir John, for he was, on his part, a slighter of *inferior* dignities, "I, his son, am here, and will be proud to receive the noble Coupland as befits his friend. Have with me, Sir John! I'll tend thy pleasure, even as our Black Prince Edward did on John of France. Peerless Amise, wilt thou not once again grace the board of Neville, and gladden the soul of a lone-left knight. The demoiselle Arnecliffe, I trust will lend me advocacy."

Amisia, thus appealed to, and her high sense of gentle courtesy embarked on behalf of the Farneleys, replied, with some warmth, in a strain of discouragement. She was the more aroused to this from perceiving that her sire appeared, most indelicately, to waver in his decision.

"Sir Rafe Neville's fair intents merit my

poor acknowledgement," said she, "but I should hope that, as a knight and a gentleman, he will recall to mind what he has already heard from my father, and hold it to anticipate my answer, as well as to preclude any further pressure of the subject."

Raimond had listened to the florid speeches of the Neville with all the poignant sensations incident to a really high-spirited man, oppressed by a numbing apprehension of artificial inferiority. He was feelingly alive to the indifference, not to say indignity, wherewith his parent and himself were treated; and cruelly so, when he found it such as to place him under the humiliation of being patronized—*protected*, as it were, by the woman to whom he would have wished to have been——; but we all know what a lover wishes to be to his mistress. As it was, he could no longer remain passive.

"If," said he, pointedly, "Sir John de Coupland holds himself inconveniently pledged; if the idle thought he hath bestowed upon the

humble rooftree of the Farneleys be premature, he can forget it at his pleasure. We do not intrude our trivial accommodation."

" Nay, Raimond," said the elder Farneley, chidingly, " thy speech falls short of seemly reverence. The noble knight may not be so freely moved by men of our degree. His worship's own inclining be his prompter."

" List to the grovelling beast of a trader!" croaked Spalding, in the ear of Tyzack, " hark ye how the lust of petty gains—the ducking genius of the mart, destroys the man! Why this fellow would lay himself down to be spurned at by pretension, even as the small fish turn their bellies to invite the osprey's beak! Out on the clay-clod!"

The friar, however, in some measure, wronged the merchant. Habituated, like all his class in this age, to regard the feudal magnates as beings of a different sphere, he could not on a sudden conquer his submissive awe; but, though

thereby impelled to reprove, he was nevertheless secretly pleased at the demeanour of his son.

Sir John, albeit his perceptions were seldom of the brightest, chose on this occasion the worthier course. He entertained a rough liking for whatever he fancied to smack of manliness, (a taste, by the by, extremely common in England, and valuable, excepting that it is often perverted to the encouragement of ruffianism) and thence thought proper to applaud and side with Raimond.

“The youth delivers honestly,” said he, “and his portraunce becomes a follower of arms, gentle or simple. Our first engagement holds, as it is meet it should. Sir Rafe, thou see’st we may not for the nonce accept thy courtesies, all honour to thee being reserved. Master Farneley, lead us the way.”

“ Methinks the baron of Coupland takes mighty account of small considerations,” mur-

mured Sir Rafe, with a curl of the lip. “ But I suppose it is to Harry Percy’s vassal the compliment is paid.”

“ Marry, no, sir knight of Raby !” returned De Coupland, somewhat nettled. “ I render me with the worthy bailiff from right good will to him and his; to whom I am, moreover, bound for other favours. I hold no second thought.”

Well could Amisia have subjoined to this declaration a hearty avowal of concurrence; but a barrier of delicacy—a fear of inferences, at which she herself wondered, restrained her. She, and all, prepared to follow her father and his chosen host.

“ The Lady Amise,” said Sir Rafe, “ Will at least grant me the happiness of tending at her side, the few moments she remains unhoused. Where the chain of pleasure scants, I had well need not to slip the smallest link.”

Thus saying, he spurred his horse, betwixt

hers and that of Farneley, to whom he threw one of those indifferent apologies, which generally rather add to affront.

The esquire was a gentleman of nature's own making. He felt a slight keenly, but he ever contemned the turbulent impulses which, to gratify passing spleen, would disturb common harmony by unseemly and ill-timed contention. In the immediate case, indeed, the pretensions of his rival, both as a nobleman and one established in familiar intimacy, were too painfully beyond challenge to admit of dispute. He therefore silently acquiesced in an exclusion he could not resent.

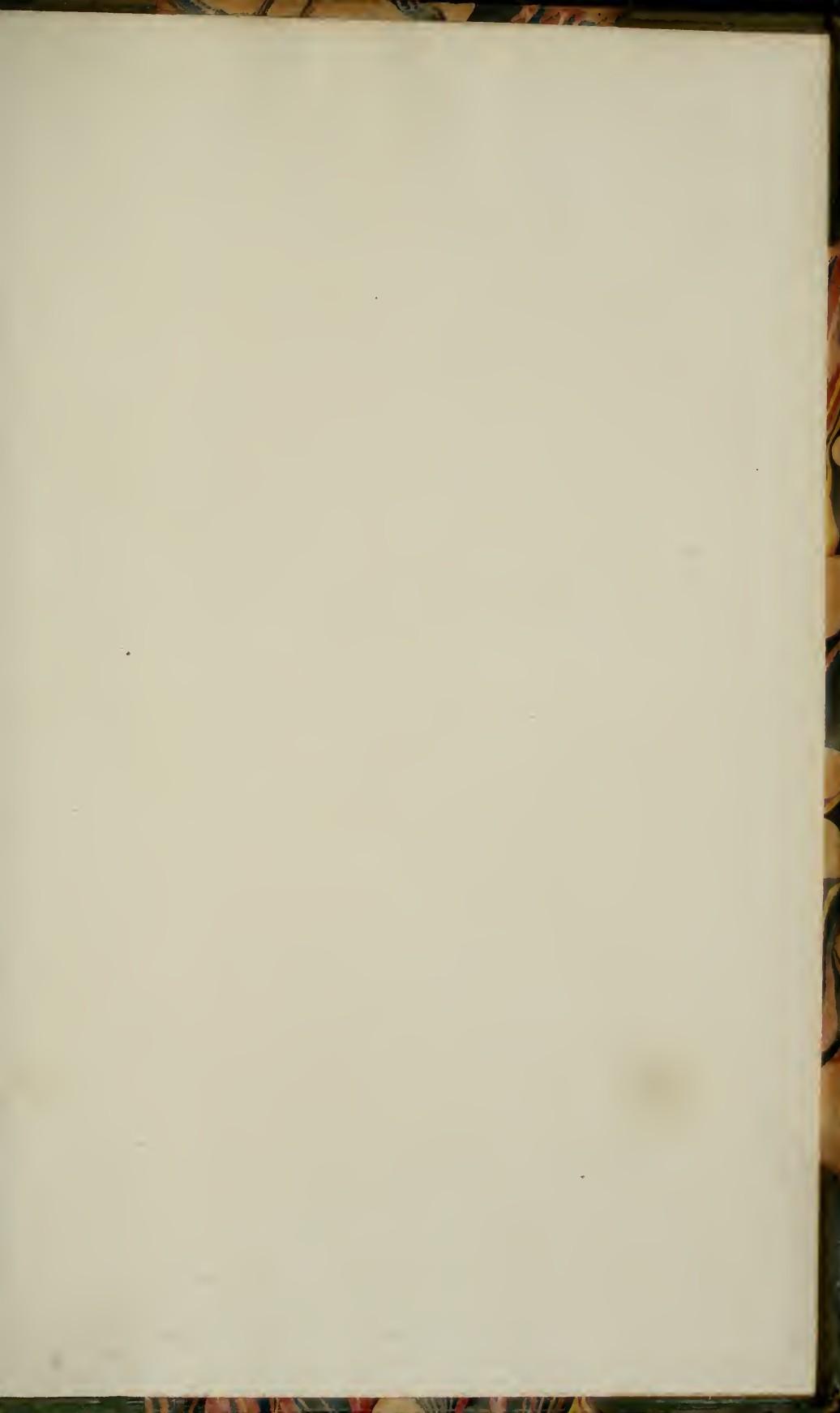
It proved fortunate that the dwelling of his father was near at hand; otherwise, he would have been tasked with a species of endurance too intolerable to bear prolongation. This arose in witnessing the easy confidence wherewith the young knight poured forth his ingratiations to the lady of his obvious admiration; attributing

any coldness that might attend their reception solely to the fatigue and inanity consequent on a long journey. If Raimond also perceived such symptoms, the same notion with respect to it prevented his drawing from them any relief. He compared, midst bitter execrations on fate, the other's bolstered position with his own ; sighing over the disparity which denied him the privilege he saw so enviably appropriated.

There are many, perhaps, who will think Raimond Farneley little better than a fancy-sick fool for yielding to these impressions ; and so might we ourselves, but for an abundant experience that the acts and aspirations of men do not usually square with reflective sense. Let one of these carpers, living in a world of prejudice, have a choice golden-headed shaft from the urchin god's quiver—which practically, we take to be the bright eye of woman herself—levelled at him, and let the adorable be of

inaccessible station, he will find himself guilty of more follies than were “dreamt of in his philosophy.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





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